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CONFESSIONS

OF A

HORSE DEALER

BY

FREDERICK TAYLOR
("BALLINASLOE")

LATE ROUGH RIDER TO THE 8TH HUSSARS, AND ONE OF THE SURVIVORS OF
THE CELEBRATED LIGHT CAVALRY CHARGE AT BALACLAVA

LONDON
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CONFESSIONS

OF A

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CHAPTER I.

ROGUES AND FOOLS.—TRICKS OF HORSE COPERS.—SWINDLING PRACTICES.—THE ADVERTISING DODGE.—THE "RESPECTABLE" GROOM.—BUYING A SECRET.—A REGULAR MUFF.—A DEAL ON THE BUSTLE.—THE RAFFLE.—THE SPORTSMAN'S WIFE.—THE EIGHTH HUSSARS.—POOR OLD JOCKO.—THE FALSE TAIL.

There are at least five hundred fools born every day, and the longer I live, the more I feel convinced that this assertion is true. But of another thing I feel equally certain, that in the population of the United Kingdom—indeed I may venture to say the whole human race—there are at least two rogues for one fool; and really, if I were called upon to give an opinion, I should say that it is more agreeable to transact business with a rogue than a natural fool, providing (as a horse-coper would say) that a man has "cocum" enough to avoid being cheated himself. I once heard one of these arch rogues say, "I don't care what people call me, if they don't call me a fool."

A rogue will get money by hook or crook, and generally stick to it, and an honest man, after trying his best, may sometimes, with great difficulty, manage to scrape up a little surplus capital; but sooner or later, he is sure to have some business transactions with a rogue, and his spare cash is then either wheedled or bullied out of his hands by a thousand-and-one little ways, so familiar to a thorough-bred rogue, who mostly contrives to steer clear from the lash of the law.

The fool has generally his money ready got for him, by some means or other, often in the form of an annuity, or—if in business—he is, perhaps, allowed to trade on honest people's means, until (by being a fool) he falls into the hands of the other gentry, who find him a ready market for his circulating medium, and when he cannot meet his payments, the honest creditor will begin to think he is dealing with a rogue, and treat him as such. The fool's eyes are then opened, and he finds the man who has cheated him more respected than himself, because he has the means to command respect; for I regret to say, that now-a-days, if a man has money and can make a good appearance, very few people will trouble themselves as to the manner in which he came by it; it is enough that he has it. That "honesty is the best policy," no one can deny; but roguery is the most fashionable, and those who really know the world and human nature, will admit that a genuine Bank of England honest man cannot live in business and pay his way.

In exposing the numerous tricks of horse-copers, let it not be understood that I am prejudiced against them more than other dishonest tradesmen; for in the course of my experience I have known many men, who, if cheated out of a few pounds in the purchase or exchange of a horse, would transport the horse-coper, if the case were strong enough, and they could catch him. And yet these same individuals would swindle the wives of their most respected friends, to the tune of a few pounds, any time she might patronise them for an article in their own business, when the dust they throw in her eyes may prevent her from ascertaining its fair value. Nay, there are plenty of men who are continually crying down horse-copers as the most arrant scoundrels that ever disgraced the human race, who themselves, but for the law, would not scruple to rob their old parish church of its communion plate.

It is an old adage, and a true one, that "there is cheatery in all trades;" but while I admit that there is not the least, I am also certain there is not the most, in the horse trade. And, if there is any consolation for a cheat, the horse-coper may console himself with an idea that, while he has plundered his foolish victim of a few pounds, he has not only taught him a lesson, but also diminished the amount of the money which would, sooner or later, have fallen a prey to others, in some other way of business.

As a duty I owe to my readers, I shall expose the various systems and instances of horse coping, which are continually coming under my notice, and doubt not that, while some may take a salutary lesson from the instances of swindling the novice in horse buying, which I shall describe in the ensuing chapters, others will be interested, if not amused, at the ingenious manner in which the various victims have been duped. It is strange that in the face of repeated warnings from the press and other sources, that people who are conscious that they are totally ignorant of a horse's nature, infirmities, or faults, will rely solely on the representations of a class of men who are perfect strangers to them, and who have neither place of business, license to deal in horses, nor reference to give as to respectability.

I am in a position to relate an instance which has very recently occurred in London, whereby a gentleman residing in the suburbs has been cheated out of no less a sum than one hundred and fifty guineas, by an organised gang of horse-chaunters. This class are much more dangerous than the genuine coper, who sells a low-priced hack at a country fair, for a sound horse, knowing him to be unsound, because they are much better educated, and consequently enabled to fly at higher game. The professional horse-chaunter is for the most part a broken-down gentleman, living in furnished lodgings, which, together with his name, he is constantly changing. On a stranger's first introduction to him, he presents a neatly engraved address card, sometimes bearing a crest, the plate of which serves until it is policy to make a new move, when a fresh one is engraved, bearing another name, the wardrobe is also changed, and the cut of his jib so altered, by trimming his whiskers or shaving them clean every morning, that his victim—who is seldom gifted with a superfluity of natural intelligence—would have great difficulty in recognising the accomplished chaunter in the crowded thoroughfares of London, where this peculiar business is chiefly carried on, for it is comparatively unknown in the provinces.

The horse chaunter rarely exposes himself to the amenities of the criminal law; and even if he did, his victim will generally prefer to let the matter drop, sooner than rake it up again in a police-court; for he will say to himself, "I shall be so ashamed to let So-and-So hear of it, and every one of my friends will think I have been foolish, and after the exposure, I may not get my money back." And so, for this reason, many horse-chaunters have, from time to time, escaped, and will again, for the very same reason, in spite of all that may be said by way of warning, because the stock of fools is kept up by constant reinforcements.

In the case above referred to, an advertisement appeared in a morning paper, written in a classical style, and purporting to emanate from a gentleman who was anxious to sell a pair of superb and high-stepping carriage horses. A first-class carriage was hired to stand in the coach-house, contiguous to the stable, in which the pair of beauties stood, (the value of said carriage having been deposited with the coachmaker prior to its removal from his establishment), a quiet-looking, but coper groom, was in constant attendance, and everything in apple-pie order, for the reception of the unsuspecting "flat," who is sure to put in an appearance to such a genuine-sounding advertisement. In this instance the rendezvous was a quiet-looking stable, in a very respectable part of the west-end, the last place in the world where swindling was likely to be done.

"You have a pair of carriage horses here for sale, I understand?" said the victim on his arrival, trying to appear as horsey as possible, in the hope of getting them cheaper.

"Yessir," replied the coper groom.

"Who do they belong to?" inquired the victim.

"I'll give you the guv'ner's card, sir, for I think I have one somewhere," said he, fumbling in his pockets, although he knew exactly where to find it. "Oh, here it is at last," said he.

"What are you selling them for?" inquired the flat.

"Well, I think the guv'ner wants one hundred and fifty guineas."

"Yes, but are you parting with them for any fault?"

"Oh, I thought you meant what price," said the acute, but simple-pretending groom. "Well, no, they have no fault 'xcept," he added, in an under tone, "I heard the coachman say that the one there in the corner stall has a little harder mouth than the other; but please not to say as how I told you, sir."

"Oh, no, here's a shilling for you; I don't care so much about that, if they are sound and quiet."

"Well," says coper groom, "I heard the coachman say that the guv'ner would give a warranty with them, and he would not do that unless they were sound, I think; but here comes the coachman."

"Morning, sir," said coper coachman, who has a beautiful Skye terrier under his arm. "Bill, Miss Harriet says you are to wash little Jessie very clean, and take her up to the house when she is thoroughly dry;" and without further noticing the flat, "Carriage and pair at three—it is now two."

The rugs are swept from the horses' withers to their buttocks, and coper groom bustles about like a besom in a fit; the "screws" are toweled from head to heel, and the harness is brought from the saddle-room; all this strengthens the opinion of the victim, that he is in for a cheap deal, and he asks coper coachman a few questions, but that worthy is sorry he cannot stay; "being ordered at three, he must go and dress, but if the gentleman could come down again in the morning, he could see them go;" but suddenly recollecting himself, he added, "Why not see them now, while they are in the carriage?"

The victim consents, and away coachee hies to prepare coper A 1, and to don the hired livery (which forms a part of the working plant of a London chaunter of the better class). This done, he is sharply back at the stable. The horses are put to the carriage.

"Better get upon the box with me," said coper coachee, touching the brim of his hat to the victim.

Glad of this favourable opportunity for a trial, he mounts the box, after walking round the horses, and looking in their mouths, as if he could tell the difference between a five-year old mouth, and one the age of a man. Coper coachee can tell by his very appearance that he is a "muff" at the game of horse-dealing; but it is the fashion of many gentlemen to profess a great deal more than they know about horses, and this only makes them better game; for many horse-copers, who know human nature well, will have the audacity to point out a spavin, or a curb, as a good point, under the term of "great strong hocks," and when the unmistakable sign of unsoundness (to a practised eye) is explained away, the really good points will speak for themselves. But this pair of horses are as clean on their legs as the day they were foaled, and their action and general appearance are all that can be desired.

They are now arrived at the door of a good-looking house, and the victim is introduced to coper A 1, who is sorry to say he has scarcely a moment to spare, for he has just received a letter from the country to say that one of his "dear little boys" is very ill at school. But if it is about the horses the gentleman desires an interview, it is sufficient for him to say they are both perfectly sound, and free from any description of vice; he is selling them owing to circumstances, which he has then no time to explain; they cost him nearly double the amount for which they are now offered; he trusts the gentleman is not a dealer, or buying them for a dealer, as he most decidedly objects to do business with dealers; not that he looks like one, but they sometimes send gentlemen who are good judges to buy horses for them, when they know the seller has an objection to let his horses fall into their hands.

The victim feels to be worth a shilling a pound more money; he is flattered to think there is nothing green-looking about him after all, and in the best of humours he accepts a seat beside coper A 1 to the railway, and he has then a further opportunity to see them "go." "Great Western Railway" is the order to coper coachee, and they are off. Every now and then the head of the victim is popped from the window to see how they bend their knees. Coper coachee is aware of this, and has them well collected, and stepping like cats on a very hot plate.

"Splendid action, sir; indeed I know of no fault, except the near side one being a little hard in the mouth, and that is not worth mentioning—because easily remedied by buckling the reins on the lower bar—but I make it a principle when I do sell a horse, to call the attention of the buyer to every little fault, to prevent ulterior unpleasantness," says coper A 1, lolling back in his seat.

This corroborates the little secret which the flat learnt from the groom, and he is convinced now—even if he had any suspicion—as to the respectability of the whole concern; and now arrived at the station, the victim and coper A 1 adjourn to the refreshment room, and a check is given in exchange for a simple receipt without a warranty. The coachee receives instructions to deliver them this evening; but he knows better than do so, until the cheque is cashed. The principals shake hands and part, the victim being set down anywhere in town, where coper coachee kindly offers to drive him, and thus he is bottled up in the carriage safe, while coper A 1 emerges from the station, jumps into a cab, and is set down in Lombard Street, where the check is cashed, and the business is safe. This is called a deal on the bustle; a message is sent that all is square, and coper coachee, with coper groom, set off to deliver the horses, and receive more tip from the victim than the screws would fetch from a coper at a country fair. The gang meet, the carriage is sent to the coachmaker's, and the deposit received back, less the few days' hire, The wardrobe and lodgings are changed, and they are ready to come out in a new character.

The dupe calls in a friend or two to look at his bargain, and these declare them to be a beautiful pair of horses. They have a rackful of hay constantly before them, and a bucket of water is given to each just before they are harnessed to the new carriage on the following day—which is the very thing to bring out their particular infirmities—and driven at a smart pace into the park, leading from Hyde-park-corner, by the side of the Serpentine, to the incline, leaving the magazine to the left.

"But, oh dear, whatever is that noise, Pa?" said one of the little angels by his side, "whatever is the matter with the horses?"

Pa's head is hurriedly thrust through the open window; he hears the unwelcome music.

"Pull up, John," says he, in a tone of alarm, as a suspicion flashed through his disordered mind.

"Are they broken-winded, John?" says he, feebly.

"Why, yessir, it's very like it."

"Drive home," is the order, and home they are driven, whistling like jays, and labouring like blow-bellows in a fit.

The victim hires a Hansom, hoping to find the coper coachee and groom, and regrets he did not take the country address of coper A 1, but the whole kit are *non est.* A day or two is allowed him to cool, and a good-natured looking, farmer sort of individual contrives to see the coachman. He has been told they have two broken-winded carriage horses for sale, and he wants something at a little money to do slow work on his farm; both horses are sold to him for £12, less a luck shilling, and a few days after are again advertised as single brougham horses, but at different places, and shown by gang No. 2 of the same fraternity, and in their turn are sure to find customers among a certain class of gentlemen who are on the look-out for a cheap horse, forgetting—if ever they knew—that good sound horses are few and far between, and cannot now-a days be bought for a trifle.

A favourite plan among copers to get rid of an unsound horse is to raffle him at some sporting public house where the landlord is a bit horsey, the coper agreeing to spend a handsome bonus, and stipulating that the winner shall do the same—and, by-the-bye, this latter sum often amounts to more than the value of the horse. It is customary in some towns, on the evening the raffle takes place, for the subscribers to have a supper. The sort of people who generally subscribe to horse raffles are tradesmen who keep a horse themselves, and the list very often includes a veterinary surgeon, the brewer, the spirit merchant, the ginger-beer and soda-water maker, the cigar dealer, or their representatives ; then there is the horse-breaker, with his corduroy breeches and well-spurred boots, with a flash scarf round his neck, a shilling pin stuck in it, and a heavy riding-whip in his hand, monopolising all the conversation with that trotting butcher ; their small, but loud talk is about Rarey.

"He be d—d," says the horse-breaker (query, spoiler). "This is the boy to tame 'em," says he, as he drops the loaded handle of the whip on the table, and makes the glasses containing the *aqua fortis* and hot water fairly jingle again. "Thank goodness his day and doctrine are about over, and he will soon be (as the farm labourer said of the hunted fox) 'gone up th' sough, gentl'em.' "

The raffle is generally announced as follows :—" To be raffled for, at the —— Inn, a splendid black gelding, rising six-years old, 15 hands 2 inches high, and goes well in saddle or harness, by fifty members at one guinea each, the winner to spend five guineas and the putter-up five guineas, to defray the expense of liquor and a supper, which will be on the table at eight o'clock." Here follow the names. And I may say, in most places, the list is speedily filled, for horse raffles are more popular than raffles for watches, pictures, and the like. Horsey tradesmen are fond of horse raffles; they meet with horsey friends, and it is "hail, fellow, well met;" they chaff one another, get up trotting matches between their old stiff £7 galloways, stake a sovereign, sign articles, go home late, and often drunk, have high words with the wife, who rifles their pockets, and finds the agreement, "that Mr. Jonathan Muddlehead (her husband) agrees to bet Mr. Timothy Haddock five pounds that his grey pony beats Mr. Haddock's brown mare," &c.; but this is enough for Mrs. Muddlehead.

"Oh, a nice fellow, isn't he, to be squandering his money away among a lot of ragamuffins like Haddock, Thompson, and the rest of them. Trot! Ah! I'll give him trotting. More need pay Mr. Jones, and not have him coming here every week for his account. However, the next thing will be a writ, the bailiffs and the workhouse. Such men as him only marry poor women to get them into trouble. Look at Mr. Simpkins—he never goes to public houses; he pays his way, and keeps his wife and children respectable. (At this point she tears up the agreement.) There—that's what I'll do with that."

"Fetch me a bottle of soda-water," says Muddlehead, placing his hand on his fevered forehead.

"Will you promise me to keep away from that Red Lion Inn?"

"Yes, yes; anything for a quiet life," says poor Muddlehead.

The soda-water is swallowed, and there is a temporary lull in the domestic storm.

I remember a lot of horses being cast from the 8th Hussars. They were sold by auction at a repository in the town where the regiment was then stationed. One of these had a rat-tail, a pair of capped hocks, and a brace of jack spavins; but his greatest curse was his rat-tail, and for this poor old Jocko was despised by every man in the regiment. He also had the misfortune to be a black colour, and required a deal of extra grooming. Yet Jocko was nobody's horse in particular. He was groomed in turns, and ridden for punishment as a sort of pride-humbler for those who committed any petty faults, or who, for the time being, happened to be out of favour with the troop sergeant. When the trumpet sounded "Stand to your horses," the smart lace-bedizened hussar whose misfortune it happened to be to ride old Jocko a day's march, would twirl the ends of his moustache, and, rolling his eye fiercely at the bare stump sticking out of Jocko's croup, he would say, "D——n that beastly tail!"

The writer will confess that it has been his lot more than once to ride old Jocko on the line of march. Once in particular, he remembers, when changing quarters from Manchester to Hounslow, he incurred the displeasure of the troop sergeant, and for this he received a peremptory order to ride Jocko from Lichfield to Warwick. He would much sooner have walked; but there was no alternative, and when the parade call was sounded, No. 17, D troop, might have been seen looking very sulky, mounted on Jocko, whose tail cocked up like a miniature barber's pole.

The Lichfield girls were delighted with the gay-looking scarlet pelisse, slung carelessly over the rider's left shoulder, his smart brass mounted shako, and nodding horsehair plume, and his jingling sword with its bright sabretach; but oh dear! oh dear! "Look at his horse's tail!" they shouted as he trotted old Jocko up to the market place, and took his place in the ranks; but the girls and boys were soon behind him again, with their half screaming, ringing laughter. "Oh! look at his tail, look at his tail," was all the cry, until the officer in command gave the words "Walk! march!" when the band struck up "The girls we left behind us," and their screeching "Look at his tail," too; but the same cry awaited him at every hamlet and village, until the detachment marched into Warwick, where "Oh, la! Oh, la! look at that horse's tail! look at his tail!" was the reiterated cry, until Jocko was fairly stabled in his comfortable billet at the George and Dragon.

Like the tails of most horses, when divested of hair, Jocko's was about seven inches long, in shape like a carrot, but thicker at the end, with not a vestige of hair upon it; and Jocko being of a sluggish disposition, he frequently had to be touched with the spurs, when the stumpy apology for a tail would wriggle and twist like a new-caught snig, and this always increased the mirth of the gaping crowd, who invariably collect on the appearance of soldiers in a provincial town.

From Hounslow the regiment marched to York, and there old Jocko was cast with a lot more worn-out screws, to be sold by auction in the usual manner, a gang of copers being the principal purchasers, the average price realized being about £6 each. The copers fastened a wig (false tail) on old Jocko's stump, by means of spring wires, which not only gave him a more juvenile appearance, but disguised his plain quarters and capped hocks. The brand was filed out of his hoofs, and he was then put up to be raffled for fifty guineas, as the *bona fide* property of a gentleman having no further use for him. He was won by a brewer, who said he would keep him for his own riding. Having a journey due the morning after the raffle, he mounted Jocko; but had not proceeded far before some boys told him that "his horse's tail had cumm'd off." "How rude these children are," said he, as he pushed Jocko into a trot, and left them far behind. His journey lay the way to the barracks, and old Jocko took his rider at a rasping gallop into the yard, when the regiment was parading, before marching off for field drill.

"Hi, hi, where are you going there?" shouted the sentry at the front gate, as Jocko, with his unwilling rider, crashed past him. "Hi, hi," shouted the corporal of the guard; but Jocko held on his way until he cannoned against the quarters of two troopers in the rear rank, and, fairly dovetailing himself between them, stopped—as only troop horses do stop—all of a sudden, and pitched his rider on to the croup of the horse in front, fortunately without serious injury. Old Jocko could not be induced to leave the ranks without company, and the colonel kindly ordered him a mounted escort, to whom, on their way back to the brewer's stables, he related the particulars, as communicated by me to my readers. After this, old Jocko again fell into the hands of the same gang of copers, and was frequently sold with a false tail, and rebought by their agents with a bare stump; and once he was sold to a gentleman, who rode him home from a fair after dark, with his old stump decorated with long streamers of ribbon representing all the colours of the rainbow.

This was the ruse of some rival copers, who succeeded in prejudicing the purchaser against Jocko, and finally bought him for a mere trifle. And I know for a fact that Jocko was sold and rebought for more than two years; the coper's main points were to "wig" his stumpy tail, and sell him to some purchaser who wanted a horse to go steady in harness. If a trial was required, he was dosed with opium, and those who knew his "little peculiarities" would drive him a few yards and then take him out, and give a warranty "that he was quiet in harness." And so he was; but it was the *vehicle* that bothered him most, and he seldom rested while *that* was within reach of his hind feet. His false tail would generally be found on the road where the scene took place, or if stabled for the night, before being tried in harness, the "wig" would be found under his hind feet in the stall next morning. Poor old Jocko, he was one of the few exceptions to the justly received opinion, that a bad horse is rarely seen with a "rat-tail."

CHAPTER II.

THE MARQUIS OF WATERFORD'S HORSE.—SHEWING THE PACES.—A PERFECT FENCER.—JUMP UP, SIR.—CASH ON DELIVERY.—THE SPAVIN.—THE VETERINARY SURGEON.—AN ILL-USED HORSE-DEALER.—THE ACCEPTANCE.—THE SWITCH.—GLANDERED HORSES.—A HORRIBLE DEATH.—THE SWITCH COPERS.—THE POLICE CHASE.—THE AGENT IN ADVANCE.—A CRUEL FRAUD.

"TAKE him back and return you the money, did you say?" said a well-known horse-coper in Lambeth the other day, to a gentleman who had given him seventy guineas for a horse. "Yes, I'll take him back, and find you another one that will suit you; I'm sorry you should think he's touched in the wind, but I can assure you it is quite unknown to me. Indeed, I feel certain that he was up to the warranty when I sold him to you;

however, you shall have one about which there shall be no mistake this time. Here, Joe, bring out the Marquis. The animal I am going to show you, sir, is one I bought at the sale of the late Marquis of Waterford, who always made it a rule to buy a good horse whenever or wherever he saw one, regardless of cost."

Crack goes the whip, and the horse (a great long-legged, flat-sided, straight-shouldered animal, with a head as big as a Scotch churn) is bounced on to the run with a hop, skip, and a jump, but on no account is he allowed to trot slow and evenly, for that would be the surest way to expose his infirmity, which is a spavin, *i. e.*, an enlargement on the inner side of the hock joint. But in this instance the spavin was in its early stage, and the swelling scarcely perceptible; indeed, none but a practised eye could discern the unnatural stiffness in the hocks, when the horse was in action; besides, the practised coper continually directed the gentleman's attention to the horse's head.

"Lor!" said he, "how he carries his napper; look at his great strong shoulders and loins! Carry you with hounds, did you say?"

Although the gentleman asked this question, he never jumped a horse the height of a straw in his life.

"Why, he would carry a castle, and gallop for a man's life; I wish I had as many acres of good land as he carried the Marquis over stone walls and sod-banks."

"I hope he is not the same horse that fell with and killed the Marquis," said the gentleman.

"No fear of that, sir, I'll give you my word and honour," said the coper.

"I should like to see him jump," said the gentleman.

"Jump! oh, yes. Saddle him, Joe."

The coper fixed a pole across a portion of the yard about five or six feet high, then placed the wheelbarrow and rolled a water-cask under the bar, and bearing a little to the taking off side. The horse (who never rose at a jump since he was foaled) was led up to the gentleman.

"Now, sir," said the coper, "jump on his back, and he'll take you over this rasper cleverly; he is like a flea, sir, he can jump more'rn his own height."

"I would rather see you or the lad take him over, as I am not very well to-day."

"Why, you see as how my lad has always been in a harness-room till very recently, and I don't think he ever jumped a horse in his life, did you, Joe?" said the coper, addressing Joe.

"Never," said that worthy, looking very sly.

"And for myself, I never jump horses now, for the last time I fell and broke two of my ribs—get on him yourself, sir; do you think I'd risk him at such a bullfinch as this on hard ground, if I were not quite sure he could top it in style?"

"I'd rather not jump him to-day," said the customer.

"Well, sir," said the coper, "you may take my word for it that he'll carry you next season with any hounds in the world, and be in at the death, too, if you buy him."

"Well, let me have him a few days on trial, and if he suits me, I'll take him in exchange for the one I returned," said the gentleman.

"I always make it a rule to keep my own horses in sight while being tried, for many reasons; for instance, sir, I don't know what sort of grooms you may have; they may spoil this horse, if I don't bribe them, and that I never do, for I always buy such horses as will sell on their merits alone," said the coper, with an air of dignity.

"But you have seventy guineas of my money, and you will be running no risk," said the dupe.

"Yes, but you don't suppose I can sell such a horse as this for seventy guineas; why, he cost me eighty-five guineas at the sale at Curraghmore."

"How much can you take for him, then?" said the gentleman.

"Not less than one hundred guineas," said the coper.

"Well, but surely you may give me credit for the difference of thirty guineas, until I see whether the horse suits me."

"Indeed, I cannot, sir; the fact is, I have a nobleman in treaty for him; but, under the circumstances, as I have not another to suit you, you may have him in exchange for the one you brought back by paying me the difference," said the coper.

A cheque was given for the amount, thirty guineas, and the screw taken away. After being ridden a few days the new-sprung spavin began to develope itself (having been carefully nursed since its first appearance): he was taken to a veterinary surgeon, who told the dupe to get rid of him at any price; for, said he, "although blistering may do him a little good, nothing less than firing will render him serviceable, and the expense, with keep, &c., until he is fit for use, will amount to considerably more than his value." The victim now began to see his folly, or, in vulgar parlance, to "smell a rat;" he directed his groom to lead the horse to the coper's stable, whither he accompanied him, and the following conversation ensued:—

"Good morning, sir."

"Morning, sur."

"My veterinary surgeon says this horse is spavined."

"Indeed! who is your veterinary surgeon?"

"Mr. ——, in —— street."

"Oh! I know that d—d scamp; he's a spite against me because I never tip him."

"What do you mean by tipping him?"

"Why, sir, if I had known where you intended to have the horse examined, I mean to say that, by sending him a 'five pun' note, this horse, which as he says has a spavin, would have had no spavin at all; that's what I mean to say; and you may tell your veterinary surgeon that I say so."

"Well, but you cannot deny that the horse is quite lame; what is it if it's not a spavin?"

"Why, it's a *sprain* in the hock joint; you've been jumping him by the day together, or some of your marlocks."

"Indeed I've not, and shall leave him, and expect you to refund my money."

"Shall you really? Well, that does seem strange; a pretty pitch horse-dealers would come to if they would allow swells to have their good sound horses, ride 'em and drive 'em about, and then get a vet to say as how they're spavined, and expect all their money back. But suppose I were to consent to take this here hoss back, what would you think of allowing me?"

"Why, I don't see how you can reasonably expect me to allow you anything, seeing that a respectable veterinary surgeon says that both the horses I had on trial are unsound."

"Vittirenery surgeon be d—d! What has he got tu du with my horses?"

"Well, I want no unpleasantness, I'll allow you five guineas."

"Will you, indeed, five guineas? Do you think as how I'm cranky?" this is said in a bullying tone.

"Well, how much do you require?"

"Why, twenty guineas, and then I'll take the horse back and return you the money."

"Very well, give me eighty-four pounds, and the matter is settled."

"I cannot give you the cash this week or two, but I'll give you my acceptance at a month's date."

"Your what?"

"My acceptance, which is as good as money; I should like to see the man who will say it is not," looking very fierce.

Gent considers. Here is a fix! one hundred guineas in the hands of this bullying scoundrel, and nothing for it. What is he to do? The horse is not worth a row of pins, therefore it is useless to take him back, and the question is, that being compelled to wait for his money, would it not be advisable to allow the man twenty guineas, and take his bill for £84? surely he will meet it when it becomes due.

"Well," said he, with a deep-drawn sigh, "I'll take your bill for the balance, allowing what you ask."

This was just the thing for Mr. Coper, as it reduced the transaction to a matter of debt, and also allowed him plenty of time to clear off—or, in coping slang, "to lammas." The document was signed, and kept by the poor dupe until it became due, and, as a matter of course, dishonoured. Mr. Coper was sought, but, as usual, was *non est*, and so his victim had neither horse nor money, leaving a vacancy in his exchequer to the amount of one hundred and five pounds sterling.

In horse coping slang, a glandered horse is designated a "snitch." The plugging process is performed by cramming his nostrils with tow, to prevent the exposure of the mucous discharge from the ulceration which exists to a fearful extent in his nostrils; but previous to this plugging, a quantity of snuff and pepper is applied to the nostrils, which, by reason of the horse's breathing through them alone, must be inhaled, and this causes him to sneeze out any matter which may be accumulated there. His nostrils are then carefully sponged, and the tow (through which he can breathe) is thrust up, and the plugging business is complete.

Glanders is a most malignant and highly contagious disease, so much so, that the law of our land justifies the destruction of a glandered horse wherever he may be found. The disease is caused by a repetition of colds upon colds, and by confinement in close, badly-drained, and ill-ventilated stables. It discloses itself by a constant discharge of a greenish yellow colour, and of a sticky glutinous nature, from the left nostril, a swelling of the glands beneath the lower jaw, and unnatural redness and inflamed appearance inside the nostrils. To the practised eye, an uneasiness about the horse's head will be perceptible, and certain other symptoms, which —although difficult to describe—are, nevertheless, a never-failing evidence of the existence of this most dangerous disease, which, when arrived at the stage as above described, admits of no cure.

The novice who may suspect, but still be uncertain as to the existence of this malady in a horse offered to him for sale, may set all doubts at rest, by placing in his left hand a quantity of sharp snuff or cayenne, and (if the coper stand by) under the pretext of examining the horse's mouth, as if to ascertain his age, by drawing the nether lip from the horse's incisors with his right hand, and the over-lip with his left, it is placed in such a position as to cover the nostrils, and the horse cannot help but inhale the irritant therein, which adheres to the tow, and still further irritates the already inflamed membrane of the upper air passages, and almost instantly causes the poor afflicted animal to sneeze out the plug; and the man, whoever he may be, will be neglecting an important duty if he does not immediately destroy the horse or place the matter in the hands of the police.

If the horse be in his own hands, and he be uncertain whether the suspicious-looking discharge—which, at times, will proceed from catarrh or cold—may be glanders, he should place a pail of cold water under the horse's nose and let the mucus drop in; if it sinks it is a cold, if it floats it is a suspicious discharge, and doubtless will, in the end, prove glanders; colds should never be neglected, or, in defiance of all treatment afterwards, inflammation of the respiratory passages may follow, and hence glanders.

The coper who deals in glandered horses is a double-dyed scoundrel of the worst description. I knew one who died a most horrible death, caused by the inoculation of his body, through a punctured wound, with the discharge from the deceased horse, conveyed through the medium of his pocket handkerchief, which he had used to wipe the horse's nostrils. It is a criminal offence to sell a glandered horse in a fair or market, and whenever the sale of one is effected, the gang vanish as if by magic, and travel both far and fast along the most unfrequented roads, and, if possible, avoiding the towns, villages, or toll-gates, by which they may be traced to their destination, wherever that may be; but it is very rare that this class of coper has any settled dwelling place, his own parish being generally too warm for his health.

In the year 1856 I was riding along a bye-lane in the vicinity of Warrington on a fair day, when I overtook two of these snitch copers. I knew them to belong to this class, and I could tell by their anxious looks that a snitch had been sold. After chaffing with them a few minutes, a rattle of a vehicle was heard behind us, and approaching at a rapid rate.

"What's that coming?" said one.

"A phaeton with three gentlemen," was the answer.

"Gentlemen be d—d! they're bobbies" (policemen), exclaimed the one who asked the question, as they both instantly topped the hedge.

The vehicle stopped, and two policemen alighted, and jumping the hedge, gave chase. The race was a very exciting one, but as they neared the banks of the Mersey, their determined pursuers gradually drew upon them, and they were finally captured and brought back and placed in the phaeton; but the affair was hushed up by their returning the money to the victim (who was in the phaeton), by some means, before they arrived at the police office. And this is, in most instances, the case, the victims preferring their money back to the trouble and annoyance of a prosecution, and consequent exposure of their ignorance of horseflesh.

The common mode of offering glandered horses for sale is to show them when in harness, or riding them as hacks in the vicinity of the fair ground; for if offered in a fair, the regular dealer would instantly detect and destroy them. But the snitch coper knows better than to run any such risk; his favourite ruse is to send one of the gang, as his "agent in advance," who contrives to worm himself into the company of a higgler or greengrocer, residing in the neighbourhood where the fair is held, and states that if he (the higgler) requires any carting performed, he will lend him a horse, having one coming to the fair which he wants to show in harness to a customer. This very often succeeds; if not, a cart is hired, the name board on which bears the address of some one who is in business at the place where the fair is held; this is an admirable blind, as the flat never suspects the actors in this shameful affair to be copers.

The horse is left the night before a short distance from the town, with the confederate agent. The coper bustles about the fair looking out for a victim, and being a good judge in physiognomy, he soon selects one from those who are inspecting the strings of horses which belong to that class which he has for sale (barring the glanders); he watches him from gang to gang, until certain that he is really a buyer. He then walks boldly up, and accosts him with—

"Are you searching for a useful harness horse?"

"Yes, I am," says the victim.

"Well, a friend of mine has one to sell," says coper.

"Where is it?" enquires his victim.

"At work, so-and-so, if you don't mind walking with me as far."

This is just the thing required, for no man likes to buy a harness horse from a stranger unless he first sees him in harness. The whole affair looking so genuine and straightforward, a suspicion of foul play is never entertained. The victim is introduced to the confederate, and the horse is sold, and so is the customer, who belongs to that grade in society who can ill afford to lose their money.

The glandered horse is rarely sold for more than £20: the general price being under £10. For as this malady seldom appears but as a winding up of many other minor afflictions, he is considered, exclusive of glanders, considerably below the mark for a gentleman, or even well-to-do tradesman. I have, nevertheless, in the course of my experience seen many first-class horses afflicted with this disease; this has, in most cases, been contracted by contagion, but being in the hands of those who can afford to lose them, they are soon destroyed.

No man, having a shadow of a claim to respectability, will prolong the life of a horse after being thoroughly satisfied of his having contracted this fearful disease. For if a glandered horse is once introduced into a stable, almost every horse in that stable will, sooner or later, become infected and die.

CHAPTER III.

MAKING UP HORSES.—BISHOPING.—A METHUSELAH.—THE AGE OF HORSES.—MARKING THE TEETH.—PUFFING THE GLIMS.—GYPPING.—THE FIG.—AN IMPUDENT TRICK.—JERUSALEM LAMENTED.—THE CHUCK-BACKED HORSE.—THE DEAL.—THE PIPER AND THE ROARER.—THE CLEVER GROOM.—A FOOL AND HIS MONEY.

It requires an experienced coper of the very first water to make up an aged horse to imitate a young one, to make a colt appear at the age of maturity, and thereby enhance their marketable value.

There are thousands who ride and drive horses, more or less, all their lives, who never can tell the age of a horse by examining his teeth: and many experienced men are at fault after the horse has attained the age of eight years, more especially if he has been cleverly "bishoped," and his form still retains the appearance of vigour, which is the case with many horses until a great age. But this, of course, depends entirely upon the amount of labour and the treatment they may have undergone. Every horse-coper makes a point of purchasing a screw which is afflicted with some particular infirmity, in the disguising of which he most excels. The clever "bishoping coper" is always on the look-out for what he calls a "Methuselah," and the grand finishing-stroke to his particular calling is to conceal the ravages of age. The horse is selected as fresh on the legs as possible—in fact, as young in his appearance as the best of old horses can be.

Most of my readers who may be interested in the perusal of these chapters, will probably have read the works of Youatt and others on the horse, in the pages of which are described the progress of dentition, and the appearance of the horse's teeth at various stages, from foalhood to maturity; and as, in my contributions, I always make it a rule to confine my observations within the pale of my own practical experience, or that of others, which I know has never been served up to the public in a readable form, I shall content myself by informing those who are inexperienced in horse-flesh, that at eight years old the black marks on the upper surface of the incisors (front teeth), which appear at an early age, and disappear as time progresses, are obliterated, and it is for the imitation of these marks, so as to resemble their natural appearance at five years old (the age at which horses reach maturity), or some other age corresponding with the general appearance of the horse, that the skill of the "bishoper" is practised. At eight years old, the canine teeth (tushes) are also considerably worn and blunt, and the whole teeth are of a dirty yellow colour. Very old horses may be distinguished by the great length of their incisors, and the tushes being worn down very considerably. Those animals which are of a dark colour, such as blacks, browns, dark bays, or chesnuts, will have a mixture of grey hair on the face; along the neck, mane, and withers, the dapple grey. Colours gradually give place to a permanent white, commencing at the head, and in course of time extending all over the body, the legs being last to change colour. In the aged horse may also be noticed a deep indentation over each eye, which, in coping parlance, is called the "glims."

I shall now proceed to explain how all these marks of age are obliterated, and an appearance of youth given to the poor old horse, which is well calculated to deceive the unwary purchaser, especially when the horse is offered by a plausible oily-tongued coper in a fair, where this business is mostly transacted in a hurry, and where the novice has no opportunity of obtaining the advice of an honest, experienced man, even if he suspected foul play.

The "bishoper" and his confederates will lead the horse into a building strewed with a deep bed of straw, and secure from observation; they will then hobble and cast the poor old creature on his back, securing him so firmly that he cannot struggle. A thick wooden gag is then thrust between his molar teeth (grinders), leaving his incisors open and in a convenient position for the operation, which is commenced by first filing down the edges of the incisors to the required length, then the sides or surface are filed, to cleanse them of the dirty yellow colour, and the whole is rubbed smooth with sand-paper.

A sharp steel-pointed engraving tool (made for the purpose, and sold secretly by itinerants at fairs) is then applied to the edges or tables of the incisors, in which little holes, in a concave form, are made to imitate the natural marks which would exist at that particular age which the coper intends to represent the horse. A red-hot iron tool is then applied with great care and skill, by which a permanent black mark is indelibly stamped on the teeth. But if this is clumsily performed, unnatural stains will appear around the edges of the teeth, and an experienced man will have little difficulty in detecting the swindle.

The disguising of the deep holes above the eyes, which exist in all aged horses, is termed "puffing the glims," and is performed by first perforating the skin several times with a pin, into the hollow space beneath, and applying the lips, blow them full of air; they then present the same appearance, to a common observer, as the corresponding parts in much younger horses.

This done, there now only remains the grey hairs to be disposed of, and the make-up of the Methuselah is complete, which are disguised by what is called "gypping." In black or brown horses, the horse is washed all over with warm soap and water, mixed with a little soda, to clean his coat from dirt and grease; he is then thoroughly dried with straw wisps and coarse towels, and trotted briskly about to assist the drying; a solution of India ink is now cleverly applied to the parts which are mixed with grey hairs; other colours are dyed with a preparation corresponding with the natural colour of the horse's coat; much importance is attached to the best secrets, in the preparing of colours and the manner of applying them, and some, of course, excel others at the business. I have known instances where men, who have owned the horse for years, after selling him at one fair, have bought the same animal at another from these clever copers, and have never suspected the deception until they have arrived home, when their suspicions have only been awakened by the exhibition of some peculiar trick, and other little et ceteras which they fancied could only belong to the old horse which they once owned; this may appear strange, but I pledge my reputation to the truth of the statement.

But although the appearance of the horse's coat and teeth is changed, the "make-up" does not exactly stop here, for yet another link has to be added to the chain of cruelty by which the poor old horse, after working the best of his days in the service of man, is held in bondage. Before he is offered for sale, he is confined, as long as circumstances will permit, in a dark stable, the coper being particular to exclude every ray of light, and as the time approaches for his being shown in the fair, the brutal fellow will belabour him with all his might when fastened up in the stall, with a heavy ash-plant; and if by this, unsightly weals are raised on the skin (which is mostly the case) these are erased by pricking them here and there with a pin and running the fingers along to press out the air, which leaves the surface level as before the cruelty is practised.

The horse is then treated to the indispensable "fig." A man leads him out, being closely followed by the brute who has so recently and shamefully abused him with the instrument of torture, which he still keeps within range of the horse's eye. The confinement in the dark stable makes him step high when brought out into the dazzling light of open day, his ears move in rapid succession, alternately up and down, and his eyes flash wildly, as if in constant dread of a repetition of the dose of ash-plant, as it is held in a threatening attitude by the same hands who administered it in the stable. His poor old bewildered head is cruelly chucked up by the hand of the runner, on the severe curb bridle and his tail is curled upwards by the sharp pain proceeding from the dose of "fig" (ginger), which is snugly ensconced in the cavity beneath it. In fact, his whole appearance is so altered, that many a man, who may be several degrees higher than a greenhorn, will declare him to be a magnificent animal, full of fire and spirit.

"How much for the Bobby?" asked two impudent-looking horse-copers to a gentleman who had been purchasing a very remarkable, good-looking nag horse, for which he had just paid £45, and whose groom was leading it away from Preston fair, on the 6th January last. "Were you speaking to me?" said the gentleman.

"Yes! Who and what are you that you should not be spoken to?"

"Go about your business, you low, ignorant fellow!"

"It's our business to give you in charge of the police, if we did it properly."

"What for?"

"What for? Why, for offering a broken-backed horse for sale; we know you."

"I'm not offering any horse for sale; I have only just bought him."

"Come along, Sam, you're mistaken; he's a fool, not a rogue. Beg your pardon, sir; we took you for a coper, and it seems you are a flat. Good bye! We wish you luck with 'old Robert.'"

"Whatever can be the meaning of this?" said the gentleman to his groom.

"I really don't know, sir."

"Surely the horse is all right; but I have a warranty, and the gentleman from whom I purchased him said that he was the Vicar of ——. Then again——"

He was interrupted here by another of the same firm, who had contrived to meet him at a cross road on the outskirts of the town. "Two quid for the old Bobby," said this individual, holding out a halfpenny in his left hand, the right hand at arm's length, and grasping a well-worn ash-plant.

"Now, my good man, I really don't know what your meaning is when you call this horse an 'old Bobby.'"

"Don't know? Come, no gammon! I'll make it two quid and half a bull, and pay you the dust now."

"I'm still in the dark; besides, I have only just bought the horse."

"Indeed. Who from?"

"A very respectable gentleman, the Vicar of ——."

"Oh, oh! Ha, ha! I know; he was a tall man, dressed in a regular swell suit o' black, and a white choker, and two of his front teeth out."

"Well, that is a good description of the gentleman from whom I purchased him."

"Why, I thought everybody knew 'Long Jack,' or, as some people call him, the 'Darby Tup.'"

"Indeed, I never had the honour of his acquaintance, and think you must be mistaken."

"Did he give you any religious tracts?"

"He did."

"Entitled 'Jerusalem Lamented?'"

"Yes, here they are," (producing tracts).

"Now, I'll convince you that he also sold you a 'chinked-backed' horse, for which the money I offered you is a fair price."

"You never offered me any money."

"Yes I did, two quid and half-a-bull."

"What do you mean?

"I mean two sovereigns and half-a-crown."

"I gave £45 for him, and received a warranty with him."

"Very likely; shouldn't wonder. But look here, sir, (with this the coper pinched the vertebræ of the horse's back with his finger and thumb just on the seat of injury—on the arch of his loins—and the poor animal suddenly cringed until his belly nearly touched the ground), this is the place where his back is chinked. I have known this horse for four years, and he has been bought and sold at every fair in the kingdom. Long Jack has made a little fortune by him, one way or other, although he seldom offers him for sale himself, except to a 'plumb butt fool.'"

"Then he's not the Vicar of ——."

"Vicar of blazes, more like!"

"I'll go back to the fair, and give him in charge for swindling me."

"You need not trouble yourself. He is miles away before now; I saw him off myself."

"And what do you want with the horse, since you say he is of so little value?"

"I've been trying to get hold of him for the last six months, for a young veterinary surgeon, who wants to slaughter him for examination."

"Are you a horse-dealer?"

"Well, I'll be candid with *you*, I'm not what people generally call a horse-dealer; I'm a horse-coper."

"What's a horse-coper?"

"One who gets money in any way he can, so that he keeps clear of the everlasting staircase."

"What's that?"

"The treadmill. We all deal in wids, roarers, pipers, bulls, knocks, millers, and Bobbies, such as you have here; but this particular Bobby I want for the purpose I told you, so I'll give you another half-bull, if you'll give me a bob out for luck."

"I'll not take any such money."

At this juncture another of the gang rides up in a contrary direction to where the fair is held. "A useful-looking horse you have here, sir," says he, "is he for sale?"

The gent, anxious for his opinion, replied, "Well, yes; I think I shall sell him." (Coper 1 now stands aloof.)

"How much?"

"Fifty guineas."

"He's well worth *half the money* if he's sound."

"I have a warranty with him; for I've only just bought him in the fair."

"Oh! I daresay; but I never care much for warranties; I prefer my own opinion to all the warranties that ever were written." And, dismounting, he proceeded to examine the horse. First looking at his mouth and eyes, he then picked up his fore feet, and ran his hand down the horse's shanks, from the knee to the fetlock, to feel for splints; then the hocks are scanned over for curbs or sprains, and the whole matter is summed up by the crafty coper shaking his own head. as if to ascertain whether there was anything in it, and turning to the groom, said,

"Run him on a few yards, and turn him sharp round."

The groom obeyed. "Oh, oh! That's his game, is it?" said the coper, as, when the horse turned round suddenly, he threw up his head in the halter, and instantly dropped into a low, cringing walk, as if suffering the most excruciating agony in his hind quarters; his back was bent like a slack rope, and the back part of his hocks nearly touched the ground. The groom tugged vigorously at the halter to drag him along.

"Come up, come up," said he; but the poor creature seemed more like "coming down."

The coper now commenced to pinch his back-bone, running his finger and thumb, from the fall of the withers along the back, inch by inch. "I shall find it directly," said he. "Oh here it is," he exclaimed, as, when he came to the horse's loins, the horse fairly groaned with agony under the unfeeling coper's cruel pinch, on the exact joint of the vertebræ containing the seat of injury; and, turning to the unfortunate dupe, "Why, you cussed horse-coping thief," says he, as he mounted his pony, "did you think I was a flat, that you should attempt to swindle me out of fifty guineas with a broken-backed screw of the very worst stamp?"

"No, no! I assure you," said the gentleman.

"Oh, you be d——d! I'll send a policeman after you," said he, as he cantered off.

"Better take my money, sir, and cut it, or you'll be in a scrape," said the first coper.

"Well, take him, and give me the money."

Coper counts out two sovereigns and five shillings from an old greasy purse. "Give me the bob back for luck," says he, as he hands it over. A shilling is returned; the coper spits upon it, and slips it into his pocket, and the Bobby is once more in the hands of the same party who brought him to the fair, and they have cleared about £42 10s. by the transaction. The gang, five in number, meet to divide the spoil at a place previously assigned, Long Jack receiving the lion's share. The horse was taken to the railway station, and sent in a box to Manchester, then the head quarters of this particular gang. From thence he was travelled to various places. I saw him at Cardiff fair in May of the same year, in the hands of the same party, who, I have no doubt, had sold and rebought him many times since Preston fair.

"There's quality and fashion, not to be equalled under the sun, and if they would pass a veterinary surgeon's examination, would fetch at least 500 guineas," said a plausible man, of respectable exterior, the agent and accomplice of a gang of copers in the West End of London, to a young gentleman who had plenty of money, but no common sense, and who applied to the coper as the person having two pair of fashionable, high-stepping carriage-horses for sale, as described in an advertisement, "in consequence of the decline of the London season."

The pair in question were dark bays, stood nearly seventeen hands high, fine steppers, and in blooming condition. They had been matched and trained by the coper and his confederates to work well together, but had never been driven as "a pair" in a gentleman's carriage. One was a confirmed "roarer," and the other a rank "piper." They had been selected and purchased solely for coping purposes, and belonged to that class termed by copers "flatcatchers," and their value was not more than £20.

"Why won't they pass a veterinary surgeon's examination?" enquired the gentleman.

"They appear to be the least in the world touched in their wind, sir, but with a groom who understands the treatment of this little infirmity in horses, it would never be the least perceived, and, in the course of six months, I have no doubt that any veterinary surgeon would pass them perfectly sound. The groom who has had them in charge has been giving them mouldy hay and musty oats, feeding them with large quantities of this provender a very short time before they were ordered out, and thus distended their stomachs with undigested food, as to make it appear as if they were affected in their wind, to serve his own purposes."

"Indeed! what purposes could *he* have to serve by so wantonly depreciating his master's property?"

"Why, sir, it is customary, when a gentleman purchases a pair of carriage horses from a dealer, to make the groom and coachman a present. This pair of horses were bought from a dealer who has made a stand against this custom, and the result is the slow, but sure revenge, which the groom practised, and by this means he succeeded in prejudicing his master in favour of the dealer from whom he purchased another pair; and so the unprincipled servants got their fee. One of them got drunk, and told all this to one of my stable-men, in confidence, and I bought them from the dealer to whom they were sold, as being unsound; but my belief is that, with good treatment, they will be as sound as a bell of brass' in a very short time."

"But where can I get a groom who will be honest to me, and who would properly understand the treatment of these horses if I were to buy them?"

"If you *do* buy them, sir, they will do you good, and (for my own sake) I will guarantee to recommend you a groom who shall be all you require, for I happen to know one who perfectly understands his business, and it is lucky, I expect him here every minute."

"Well, on those conditions, I will take the horses, provided we can agree as to price. Let me see, I think you said 150 guineas for the pair in your advertisement; I suppose you mean 140?" this was said good-humouredly.

"Why, yes, I'll accept that amount—of course, you take them, like a man takes his wife, for better or worse."

"I understand you; but I suppose you will exchange them if they do not suit?"

"Oh, yes, with pleasure, but no fear of them not suiting."

Enter Tommy (the man whom the coper recommends as a clever groom). Tommy is a downy-looking, lop-eared individual. He stands at a respectful distance in the yard, playing with a goat. He was dressed in very tight pantaloons, strapped down to a pair of—what appeared to be—gentlemen's cast-off boots, until the pantaloons fairly grinned again, a very long waistcoat, and an upper garment, known as a "puzzle devil," or a kind of cross between a coat and a jacket; this attire had evidently been made to the fancy of some ex-flunkey, from whom it had been borrowed for the occasion. Tommy's closely-cropped head was surmounted by a flat-brimmed hat, and round his neck he wore a light-coloured scarf, in which was prominently displayed a Birmingham pin with a horse-shoe head.

"Here, Tommy," said the coper. Tommy obeyed with alacrity, and saluted them both with his forefinger raised to the brim of his hat. "This gentleman wants to speak to you," said coper.

Gentleman to Tommy (*alias Coper* 2).—"I understand that you have had some experience in the care of valuable horses."

"Yessir, I hought tu du, for I was brought up in a racing stable."

"Indeed, why did you leave it?"

"Why, sir, cos I was too heavy."

This and a few more questions were answered to the gentleman's satisfaction, and Tommy was engaged to go a month on trial, and at once installed into office by leading to the victim's residence the pair of screws, for which notes and gold amounting to 140 guineas were paid.

Tommy, the groom, was one of the gang who did not mind passing a week or two in service as his part in the play; he fed the horses on damped hay and mashes for about ten days, when it suited his purpose to have some words with his master; this arose through not obeying orders to drive faster; and these orders were so repeatedly disregarded, that his master gave him a severe lecture, when Tommy packed up his traps and left him, as he said, for a better situation. Another groom was engaged, who, of course, commenced to feed them on hard dry corn and hay, giving them an unlimited supply of water, and when they were driven out at a spanking pace a few days after, they piped and roared like the band of a Highland regiment. While standing a moment at the door of the gentleman's mansion, a passer-by remarked to the coachman that his horses were very accomplished, as they understood both "music and drawing."

"Beg yer pardon, sur, but I think it would be better to sell these here horses, for they are sure to git wusser and wusser," said the new coachman; but the gentleman is unwilling to do so, for, as he justly remarks, he had never heard them make that horrid noise before; it must be that the groom does not understand their treatment (his man servant is for the present both groom and coachman).

"The dealer was right after all," said he. He goes to him again and asks his advice.

"I'm afraid the horses are injured," said he to the coper.

"I'll go and look at them," said the coper.

They were put in the carriage, and the coper drove them himself at a rapid rate, and when the (to him) well-known music was at its height he ramped them into the yard.

"These horses are ruined, sir, from some cause or other, and recently too, for I met your late coachman yesterday, and he told me they were all right," said the coper.

"Could the man be induced to come back, think you?"

"We'll try to persuade him to do so."

A week or two passed over without coming to any amicable arrangement with Tommy, during which the victim became heartily sick of his musical horses. The coper called upon him to say that Tommy had entered upon another situation, and enquired how the horses were getting on "Very bad, indeed," said the gentleman. "Better exchange them for the other pair," said the coper. This advice was taken, and the horses exchanged places. One hundred guineas more are also transferred from the victim's account to the exchequer of the coper, as the difference in price, with the understanding that if that pair did not suit, he was to have his money back, less ten guineas for the use of both pairs. This made a total of 240 guineas paid to the coper, for which the victim had a pair of horses considerably worse than the first pair; for *their* infirmity was *visible*, whereas in the others it was *invisible*, and, of course, better for coping purposes.

One of the new pair had a "bone spavin," and the other was "lame in the shoulder," but having had good rest, and having been carefully exercised for some time, the lameness is not perceptible except to a man of experience; but, when they were put into heavy work, their respective infirmities soon began to exhibit themselves. They were sent back, and the gentleman waited upon the coper for his 230 guineas, according to agreement; but it was not convenient, just then, to pay him in cash, so he proposed his acceptance at two months' date.

"But I want the cash to buy another pair of horses," said the victim.

"Oh! I'll get a friend of mine to discount the bill, and, as it is for my convenience, I will pay the discount," said coper.

Gent. (who, I forgot to say, was only just of age).—"That will do, so long as I get the cash."

The bill was drawn, and the coper pushed it towards the victim (who was as ignorant about bills as of horse flesh), and handing him the pen, said, "Just write your name across here."

The greenhorn endorsed the bill, and shortly after was introduced to another of the gang, at his lodgings in a fashionable street. After the introduction the coper produced the bill.

"Can you discount me this little bill?" said he.

"Certainly," said the friend.

The money is produced, and the victim receives the

£241 10s. in full, the trifling discount being paid out of the coper's own pocket. So far he is impressed with a capital opinion of Mr. Coper, never thinking he is liable on the bill.

"I am extremely sorry we have not been able to suit you with a pair of horses to your mind," said the coper; "those two pair of horses will lose me a deal of money. The last pair you tried I bought from Lord ——; they were sound when I had them, and I cannot account for their lameness. The other pair I told you all about. You must mind, sir, and keep out of the hands of horse copers; there are so many in London. If you will wait until the day after to morrow, I shall have a pair to sell on commission, for a gentleman who is off to the continent, and they must be sold cheap, for he cannot wait."

The gentleman consented to wait, and was once more in the meshes of this wily coper, who sold him another pair of screws, worse than either of the other pairs, for which he received 170 guineas. This, with the bill of exchange, amounted to £420 sterling. The coper disappeared, the horses were destroyed, and when the bill became due it was dishonoured. A sharp letter was written to the victim, who finally had to pay the money.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FARMER'S STORY.—OLD BOXER.—CHESTERFIELD FAIR.—A FINE HORSE.—THE HOME ROAD.—A SPIRITED NAG.—THE HORSE GROWS WHITE.—A VERY OLD FRIEND.—SMASHERS.—DEALERS IN SOFT-'UNS.—PASSING THE NOTES.—INJURED INNOCENCE.—COMING THE BOUNCE.—THE COUNTRY INN.—THE TRAINERS.—CONFEDERATES.—A COPING REPOSITORY.—PRETENDED BIDDERS.—OLD ROBY.—FOUR POUNDS FOR THE BARGAIN.—A SELL.

I WAS lately amused by a coping incident, which a farmer related to me. He said,

"I had made up my mind to sell 'Old Boxer,' a brown horse with two white heels; I bought him at four years old, and had worked him on my farm for eleven years, and although fifteen years old, he was sound; my sole reason for parting with him was, that he could not masticate his food properly (owing to the irregularities of his teeth), so as to be kept in proper working condition; our farrier rasped and filed his teeth, from time to time, but all to no purpose, and at last he advised me to sell him. I took him to Chesterfield fair, and sold him to some horse-coping chaps for £6."

I interrupted him here.

"May I ask you whether you told *them* that the horse could not masticate his food?" said I.

"Not very likely," said he. "Well, they were very anxious to swap with me for another, asking £15 to boot; but I had heard so much about their swapping dodges, that I determined to sell first, and buy after; that is, provided I saw a horse that would suit me; many were offered, but I saw nothing I liked so well as old Boxer, and I half-regretted selling him—indeed I went so far as to offer £7 for him back again, but he was sold, they told me. I went home without one, and afterwards visited many fairs, but saw nothing in make and shape like poor old Boxer, until Nottingham Goose Fair; there I casually met with one of the men to whom I had sold my old favourite, and asked him where he thought he was now?"

"'Oh!' said he, 'my hearty, you drew me a tooth with that deal; why the old devil could not chew butter; we sold him to work in a coal-pit in Staffordshire, and he soon after died. We have one here to-day, as much like him in figure as one pea is like another; I said, when we bought him, that he was the very model of your old horse. He is five years old, and perfectly sound, and ready for immediate work.'

"'Where is he?' said I.

"'Come along, I'll show him to you,' said he; it was a little before the horse fair began, and I was taken to the stables, which were full of all sorts of horses and copers. 'Bring out that black horse we bought at Shrewsbury, Tom,' said the dealer, or rather coper.

"'All right, sir,' said a dashing-looking fellow, in a waistcoat with sleeves, and red neckerchief, and disappeared into the stable, whither I attempted to follow him; but seeing that I should have to pass many horses, whose looks and signs made it probable that I should be kicked to a jelly, I retreated, and patiently waited until the horse was brought out. I had not long to wait, before his appearance was heralded by, 'Care, care; look out there! Look out, Cranky! Do you want to be run over?' and out he bounced.

"Crack went a whip behind him; the man at his head trots him to the extremity of the street, and back again, ally fixing him with his feet on rising ground, against a white-washed building; and I must confess, that I never saw a better made cart-horse in my life; he was a jet black, with no white upon him, about sixteen hands high, and, according to my judgment, a perfect model of a farmer's horse for general purposes. His mane and tail were neatly plaited with straw, which, with the white leather halter and rosette of red ribbon, contrasted nicely with his glossy coat and superb condition. I examined his mouth, which indicated five years; his feet and legs appeared sonnd, and I made up my mind to purchase him, if the price was not too high. At this moment a bustling man came up, and addressing me,

"'This here hoss yours, sir?' said he.

"'No; he belongs to that gentleman,' said I (pointing to the owner).

"'Oh, thank you,' said he, 'I want a few useful horses for Chaplin, Horne, and Co. How much are you asking for the black?' said he to the owner, who replied,

"'I am trying to sell him to this gentleman, (jerking his thumb over his shoulder to me); but if we don't agree, I'll sell him to you at a fair price.'

"'Very well, very well,' said the man, and disappeared.

"'Now then, sir,' said the owner, 'did you ever see a horse you liked better in your life, or so well?'

"'Well,' said I, 'when my old Boxer was the same age, he was quite as good, if not better, although he might not be quite so big a horse. How much shall you ask me?'

"'Five-and-thirty pounds,' said the owner.

"'I think thirty a fair price,' said I, 'and will pay you for him with that sum, if you choose.'

"'No, I'll not take a farthing less,' said he.

"However, I finally bought him at thirty-three pounds, and was very proud of my bargain, and many a one asked me if I would sell him again; but no, I was quite satisfied with my purchase, and I at once mounted him, and started on my way home, near Ashbourne—farther I rode him, the better I liked him, for he seemed as satisfied with me as I did with him. It was near upon thirty miles to my farm from Nottingham. I had baited him twice on the road; but although he ate the bruised oats and bran, he refused his hay; at length we arrived at a roadside inn, where I generally stayed for a glass on my way from Derby market. It was about eight o'clock, and as I neared the house, I could with the greatest difficulty hold my horse with the halter. He increased his pace to a brisk trot, stopping, however, under the oil lamp over the front door.

"'Hi, holloa, threepen'orth of gin,' said I, and after exchanging compliments with the landlord (who came out and admired my horse very much), we were off again; but whatever had come to the horse—I could not hold him at a less pace than a brisk trot; and when we turned from the main road down the lane leading to my farm, he still further increased his pace, and having no saddle, I rolled off his back into the muddy lane, where he left me, and clattered into the yard at a regular gallop, stopping at the stable-door, and neighing as if the devil was in him.

"My wife came out with a lanthorn, and seeing a horse halted without a rider, she became alarmed. Her fears, however, were not of long duration, for I walked into the yard unhurt, although covered with mud; the horse was admired, bedded down, fed, and left for the night, but I could not rest for thinking about the horse being so impatient as we drew near the farm; it appeared so very strange to me. Morning came, and at five o'clock I went into the stable, and found the horse all right, and his manger quite clean; he drank a bucket of water, and ate his feed of split beans and bruised oats, then commenced to eat his hay: he did his work steady and well, and for nearly a week I was perfectly satisfied, when my son said his heels were turning grey.

"I laughed at the idea, but on examination, I found that such was the case, and on closer examination, I found that the black colour of his coat was gradually giving place to brown, and finally his two heels assumed their natural appearance, 'pure white,' and there could be no mistake. 'Old Boxer' once more stood before me, in his natural toggery. !

"What could I do? be angry! No, for I was moved almost to tears, and *really pleased* to see my old favourite again. My neighbours chaffed me; but after all, the old horse was worth every shilling I had given for him. He ate his corn, kept his condition, and did his work superior to many younger horses of theirs, which had cost them more money. The copers had so skilfully bishoped him, and filed his teeth, that they had managed what my farrier had entirely failed to do—viz., to cure him of quidding his food—*i. e.*, partially chewing, and leaving most of it in the manger.

"I kept the horse five years after this; and though for the last twelve months, he partially returned to his old infirmity of *quidding* his food, I never regretted selling him for six pounds, and buying him again in a new coat for thirty-three," concluded the farmer, in high glee.

There are in the United Kingdom several gangs of scoundrels frequenting country fairs, whose calling is far more dangerous and disgraceful than that of the regular "horse coper;" these are "smashers," or utterers of counterfeit Bank of England notes; for such characters as these, horses, and in many instances, cattle and sheep, are only a vehicle or a cover to shield them from suspicion as to the true nature of their calling.

The flash term for these notes, as used by them, is "soft-uns;" and many counterfeit notes are passed in the following manner:—There are stationed in the vicinity of the fair the *dealers* in these notes, who sell them at about five per cent. on their value, if they were good; the smashers seldom buy more than one or two at once, which they mix up among a lot of genuine notes; then, suppose, for instance, they buy a horse whose true value is £30, by paying two genuine notes and one counterfeit, they get a £30 horse for £20; the horse is passed, by a sham sale, to a confederate for £35, who generally holds a receipt embodied in a warranty for that amount, and thus proof being apparently shown that the horse has been honestly bought, no suspicion attaches to the confederate, who is allowed to hold possession of the horse in peace, while the actual smasher makes good his escape; and, supposing the farmer detects the counterfeit—a thing of rare occurrence, after very often rolling it up and depositing it among others, taken from some one else, perhaps the cheese buyer, or butcher—how is he to bring the charge home to the smasher? He may be arrested and searched; nothing, however, is found upon him but genuine money. He states that if the farmer really can *prove* that he paid him the note, he will give him a genuine one in its place, but he is always very particular; he buys and sells largely, it is true, and might have taken it in the ordinary course of business. It is dangerous to detain him in custody. He gives his name and address, which, by-the-bye, are often genuine; and sometimes he really is, in the eyes of the world, a very respectable man, for this is the very thing that blinds the suspicion, if any exists as to this point of his calling, with his own neighbours; but this dark portion of his business is never practised about his home, but, in most instances, some hundreds of miles away; he is, however, careful not to pass more than one flash note in a place; some of the more daring will contrive to pass a fifty-pound counterfeit, when a favourable opportunity offers; such, for instance, as the "touts" having found out a person with more money, or rather more cattle, sheep, or horses, than brains.

The gang put all their genuine capital into the hands of one—for there is honour among thieves—who may then be in a position to buy the whole drove of cattle or sheep. The party selected for this bold stroke is the least suspicious-looking man of the lot, and the best judge; for notwithstanding the profit they get by paying a portion in counterfeit money, it is policy on their part to buy the animals as cheap as possible; indeed, they frequently leave a flock of sheep, a drove of cattle, or a string of horses, for a very trifling difference of price; more especially, if, after a little conversation, they ascertain that the seller is a shrewd, wide-awake sort of man,—for the smasher, as well as the horse-coper, is generally a capital judge of human nature, and, in their own words, can "reckon a man up" very quick.

Most of these flash notes are so little different in their appearance to the genuine ones, that in fairs or markets, where business is transacted in a hurry, they are scarcely looked at, but rolled up among country notes and Bank of Englands, thrust into a greasy canvas bag, and paid away, time after time, without ever being suspected as counterfeit money, until they are laid on the counter of some bank, when it is often a very difficult matter to ascertain from whom they were received.

I once was sitting in the bar parlour of a country inn. There was a special train from Birmingham that day to the locality, in Derbyshire, and the inn being near the railway station, was crowded. The landlord being short of waiters, every person wanted to be served at once; but when the bustle had somewhat abated, a gentlemanly-looking man entered; he wore spectacles, had grey hair, an umbrella, and three neatly-clad females with him, one old enough to be his wife, and two apparently in their teens, who possibly might have been his daughters; he ordered tea for the lot, and tendered a ten-pound Bank of England note; the landlord had not sufficient change in the house, but got it from a draper's shop in the neighbourhood.

In the course of the same day, another of the special trainers got change at the same inn for a ten-pound note; but this time the landlord managed to scrape up sufficient, without troubling his neighbours. He laid the note by, and paid it to his spirit merchant, in the usual way of business. In the course of a month after this, the spirit merchant's wife called upon the same draper to make a purchase of some mourning, and paid for it with a ten-pound note, which the draper put by in his cash-box. Some time after this, the draper counted up his money, preparatory to a purchasing tour in the manufacturing districts, but never took the number of his notes; he, however, made a purchase in Manchester, and the cashier took them for him, or rather, for himself; when, lo! he found two notes of a number, both counterfeits, and evidently from the same plate; the notes were *morally*, but not legally traced as having come from the innkeeper, because neither the draper or spirit merchant had taken the numbers and entered them in a book, with the date, and from whom received. It created a great sensation in the place at the time, and among the ill-natured portion of the neighbours, the winks and nods were sufficient evidence that, if they were a jury, he would have little chance left but to pay the money.

I have seen a great deal of the world and its ways since then, and have no doubt that the old gentleman with the females, spectacles, and umbrella, and, may-be, a wig of gray hair, was a smasher of the first water, and the other *special trainer* was a confederate sent by him, after finding out the easy gullibility of the innkeeper; for if a man will be so foolish as to take notes from strangers, and mix them with others, taken with a similar want of caution, how can he ever expect to trace them to the party from whom he received them. This reprehensible practice is a direct encouragement to dealers in counterfeit notes and "smashers."

"What shall I say for this chesnut gelding? he is five years old, goes in harness, is as handsome as a peacock, and will carry a gentleman or lady, without tripping, shying, or broken paces; and, as far as *my* judgment serves me, appears perfectly sound," said the auctioneer at a coping repository in the provinces to an assemblage gathered round his rostrum, composed of a few gentlemen who are on the look-out for a cheap horse, and some tradesmen who are obliged to keep a horse and trap for the delivery of those commodities to their customers in which they may deal, but who are constantly buying, selling, or swapping their pony away and losing the money which they should have paid the traveller from the house which sent them that circular, the purport of which was to say that their Mr. So-and-So would have the pleasure of waiting upon them on such a day, when, &c., &c. One really would think a nudge like this would be sufficient to cool the horse fever, which seems to rage in their very souls, more especially with those who (by chance) have purchased at this repository, or elsewhere, a horse or pony out of which they have cleared a pound or two. I'll lay my life to a bad potato that such a man will never give up dabbling in horse-flesh (instead of minding his own business) until he loses the price of a useful horse—

aye, and cart, too; but he'll never tell any of his neighbours how much he loses; it is only the amount of his *gains* which reaches their ears. But by far the greater part of this assemblage is made up of horse-copers and their confederates, who soon find out which are buyers and which mere gazers.

"Now, gentlemen, favour me with an offer for this fashionable and most useful chesnut gelding," said the auctioneer, looking anxiously round the motley crowd; but no answer is made at present.

The poor devil of a horse stands quivering every cubic inch of his body in front of the rostrum, and the auctioneer being the most prominent object within range of his eyes, which are so expressive of anxiety from fear of the whip in the hands of that lop-eared specimen of human kind, in tight gaiters and capacious inexpressibles, standing behind him, that, like a half throttled cat, they appear ready to start out of their sockets, or burst.

"Run him on a few yards, Joe," said the auctioneer.

The bullet-head of Joe (covered with a skull cap) is nodded; and Lop-ears flourishes his cat-gut flag, dropping the cord with a sharp cut on the point of the shoulder. "Hooroo! hooroo! Care! care!" Bullet-head, the runner, chucks up the horse's head with the deep-levered curb bridle, raising, at the same time, his left hand before the horse's eyes, to check his pace, and thereby make him bend his knees, and exhibit a false display of action. Lop-ears, with the whip, keeps the hind-quarters in constant play; and on rounding the turn, out go the horse's heels, as if he fully intended to plant them neatly on the ribs of that man with the green spectacles, who could not get the focus in time to get out of the way.

The crowd closes up round the horse, and an individual—the model of a horse-dealing man of substance—walks steadily up to the horse's head, places his whip or ash-plant under his left arm, and examines the horse's mouth, looks (for the corroborating proofs) at the "glims," runs his hand down the inside of the fore-legs, picks up his feet and examines them, apparently with great care, passing the left hand along the near side, until it grasps the tail.

"Wo, boy," said he, as he glanced his own practised eye back to the horse's, to ascertain whether he might take a liberty, "all right."

The eye only indicates *anxiety*, not *roguery* (the man knows full well the difference), and the hands (which have been used for this purpose thousands of times) are passed gently over the inside of the hock joints, to feel for spavins, which, although invisible to the eye, may be springing, but nothing objectionable appears to be there, and the seat of curbs (back part, below the hocks) is examined with due care; the man steps backward a yard or two, and casts his eye over the general contour of the horse; he then slowly retires into the crowd (all of whom have been watching his movements), and in the course of a few seconds—

"Gentlemen, make me an offer for the chesnut gelding," is repeated by the auctioneer, and a voice responds:

"Twenty pounds."

That part of the crowd who have been favourably impressed by the animal's appearance, and who themselves would have made an offer, but for their want of confidence in their own judgment, turn sharply round to the place from whence the sound proceeds, and find out that the dealing-looking man has evidently made up his mind to buy the horse at his value; therefore, they imagine that there can be no harm in following up his bid; and, after all, the horse cannot be more than a pound or guinea too dear, for the man who examined him appears perfectly satisfied with his quality and his merits, and so the bidding goes on briskly, until it reaches an amount likely to be the utmost limits to which it is probable the genuine bidder will go. The hammer falls to his last bid, the clerk requires instant payment, and the dealing man is *non est.*

In this instance, which came under my notice, when the horse was examined he was found to be a thorough screw, being broken-winded, and not worth more than four pounds, although it had been run up to twenty-eight guineas by the owner and his confederates, who, although they went through the mockery of an examination, never coughed the horse, lest the short dry sound (peculiar to the broken-winded horse) which would be thereby produced, might be heard by some practised ear in the crowd, in which case it would be buzzed about, and prevent the sale of the horse.

Many of my readers who are inexperienced in horseflesh, may not know *how* a horse is made to cough, or if they have seen dealers or others practise this part of an examination, and *hear* the cough, they may not be able to tell whether the horse be sound in his wind or not, by the sound produced.

First, then, I shall say to my readers, when you are suspicious about a horse's wind, place your left hand gently on the ridge of the horse's neck, so as not to alarm him, and with the finger and thumb of your right hand pinch his windpipe firmly, about five or six inches from his jaw; hold on firmly, and he will cough in the course of a few seconds. Now mark the sound of the cough; if it be a long whistling kind of sound the horse's wind is right, but if it be a short, dry sound, something similar to the cough of a human being in a consumption, the horse's wind is affected. If a broken-winded horse be suffering from a cold, he will be all but continually coughing; and a practised ear can always tell when he hears the hard, dry-laboured hackle of such a one that he is broken-winded, or, in horse-dealing phraseology, a "wid."

To return to my coping repository—I remember an instance of "done brown," which occured at one of these places in the north of England; and, although very discreditable to the proprietors, was brought about by the victim himself; he was a gentleman of independent means, but of very drunken habits, and resided in the immediate vicinity of the repository. It was his regular practice to get drunk every day. He very frequently staggered into the sale-yard while the auctions were going on, and foolishly offered a price for every horse run up to the rostrum. I will, however, do the auctioneer the justice to say that he frequently cautioned him, but all to no purpose; for as sure as another sale day came, so sure it brought "Old Roby" staggering into the yard and elbowing his way up to the front of the rostrum, he bid indiscriminately for every horse run up. The auctioneer lost his temper, and determined to put a "stopper" on at once, and for ever. He knew that Old Roby was *good* for any reasonable amount, therefore the trap was laid and the victim was caught.

On the following sale day a handsome bay gelding, with flowing mane and tail, and a coat on his back as sleek as a mole, was run up to the rostrum.

"Twenty guineas," said Old Roby.

"Well done, Roby!" said a coper.

"Five-and-twenty," bid a gentlemanly-looking individual, planted for the purpose.

"Thirty," said Mr. Roby; and "Well done, Roby!" was repeated from another quarter.

"Forty," said the plant.

"Now, Roby," came from a voice in the crowd, and Roby quickly answered:—

"Fifty."

"Well done, Roby!" said the same voice.

"Any advance upon fifty guineas for the magnificent bay gelding?" enquired the auctioneer, looking at the gentlemanly-looking man, who had retired into the crowd.

Mr. Roby had a peculiar habit of shaking his head; the motion may be described as a sudden, nervous kind of twitching—the same as one would imagine might be produced in any other man, if suddenly stung in the ear with a wasp; but the sting of ten wasps in Roby's ear could not have produced a corresponding movement in his head, when the clerk called upon him to pay fifty guineas.

"Fifty d—ls as like!" said he.

"Well, you've bought the horse, and must pay for him; and it is fortunate that I know you," said the auctioneer.

The reputed owner now came up, and turning to Mr. Roby, said, in a tone of displeasure,

"Why don't you pay for this horse, like a gentleman? you've bought him fairly; and if you don't pay me to-day, you shall be served with a writ to-morrow."

The wasps were in Roby's ear again, and he began to look more serious. Another of the coping gang tapped him on the shoulder, and said,

"May I have a word with you, sir?"

"Certainly," said Roby, and the two walked away.

"Now," said the coper, "I understand you have bought a bay horse at this sale to-day?"

"Yes," said Roby, "they say I have."

"Will you sell him again?"

"I will," said Roby.

"How much must I give you for buying him?"

"Five pounds," said Roby.

"I'll have him," said the coper, "if you will bring him over to Warrington the day after to-morrow, for I have been looking after such a horse for the last month; I want to match another to run in a nobleman's carriage. I am sorry that I left my check book at home, but you can send the horse up, and come yourself to my residence (any one will tell you where I live), and have a bit of dinner with me. I have very little money with me to-day, but here is half-a-sovereign to bind the bargain. You must give me an acknowledgment in writing that you have sold me the horse, and received half-a-sovereign on account."

"Oh yes," said Roby, and received the half-sovereign.

This took place in the bar-parlour of an inn, near the gates of the repository, and when the bargain was fastened, another coper appeared on the scene.

"A glass of ale, miss," said this worthy to the waitress, "and look handy—I'm in a hurry. Have you seen——? Oh," said he, affecting to see Mr. Roby for the first time, and not recognising the confederate, "you're the very gen'lman I am looking for. I'll give you a pound for buying that bay horse," holding a sovereign towards Mr. Roby with his finger and thumb.

"I have just sold him to this gentleman," said Roby.

"Well," said he, turning to his confederate, "how much will you sell him for?'

"Money would not buy him!" replied the other.

"Oh, you're a fool," said he, as he turned on his heel, and left the place.

The reputed owner now entered.

"Oh, you here, Mr. Roby? come, settle with me for this bay horse; I want to be off."

"Oh, yes! I'll pay you for him; it was all my nonsense, or I should have paid you in the yard; however, I'll fetch you a cheque;" and away he reeled for the £52 10s. cheque, which the landlord (who I may say was also a confederate) changed, or pretended to do so, it being then past banking hours.

The horse was a "chinked" (nearly broken) backed one, not worth more than his hide and shoes, for any kind of work. He was taken to Warrington on the day appointed, but instead of Mr. Roby meeting with the man who had bought him for a match-horse, and receiving his five pounds profit, he was met by another gang of copers (connected with the first lot); they pinched the vertebra of the poor horse's back till his hocks touched the ground. Poor Old Roby was hocussed and bullied, and they finally bought the horse for £3 10s., and made him stand dinners and lots of brandy for seven or eight of the most notorious copers that infest the fairs, markets, and repositories in the north of England.

It is needless to say that Mr. Roby never entered the yard of another "horse repository" again; but I heard many persons say that every time he passed the gate of the one in question (which he had to do on his way from the inn, where he took his drops, to his residence) he always quickened his pace and twitched his head, as if suddenly stung in the ear by a wasp

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER SWINDLE.—KNOWLEDGE GOT BY READING.—AN AWKWARD DISCOVERY. — BEANING A HORSE. — NO REMEDY.—THE FAST TROTTER.—A RACE FOR A TENNER. — OLD BLAZEAWAY. — THE DISAPPOINTMENT.—THE TROTTING DOCTOR.—AN IRISH HORSE-COPER. — THE MANCHESTER SALE. — THE GREAT HORSE AUCTION SWINDLE. — A CLEVER TRICK.—A SET OF SCREWS. — JUDGING OF HORSES. — A FINE HAUL.—HIDING THE TRAIL.

"Good morning, sir," said a middle-aged, unsophisticated-looking individual to me one morning, in Kensington Gardens, "you're Ballinasloe, I presume."

"Ballinasloe, at your service, sir," I replied, with my best Derbyshire bow.

"Well," said he, "I can furnish you with materials for another chapter on a similar subject as detailed in the first, for I have recently been swindled by what I have reason to suppose is the same party."

"Much obliged to you, sir, but time presses, therefore let me have it without further ceremony."

"Very well," said he, "but I want a little of your advice. What can I do with them? Oh, the audacity, the villany!" and here he stopped, fairly choked with rage.

"My dear sir," said I, "I am quite prepared to hear any amount of audacity and villany; but, for your own sake, don't work yourself into such a towering passion, or you may make your wife a widow, or your children fatherless, by breaking a blood-vessel. They have not quite ruined you, have they?"

"Oh no, but they have swindled me clearly out of £60," said he, as soon as he could speak.

"How's that?" I enquired.

"Oh, the rascality, the wickedness!"

"Good morning, I really cannot stay to hear any further preface," said I, for I really was in a hurry.

"Stay, stay," said he, pressing my arm, "you really must expose this audacious swindle, or neither you nor I shall be doing our duty to society."

"Proceed, then, if you please, sir," said I, laughing, for I could not help it.

"Well then," he began his narrative—"I must tell you that by the most persevering industry and self-denial I have amassed as much money in business as to feel justified in purchasing a villa, about eight miles from town, and for years I have thought how pleasant it would be to keep a horse and brougham, so that my wife and children could take an airing when they felt inclined; and in time I thought we might be able to retire from business, and keep a pair of horses the same as the aristocracy. I have read most of the books published about the formation of the best horses' teeth, age, &c., and fancied I should have no difficulty in selecting one to suit me.

"I had been on the look-out for some time, when an advertisement of a brougham horse, in a morning paper, took my attention as being the very animal I required. I went at once to the address, and found a very pretty-looking bay horse, which the owner, a bustling, jolly sort of looking man, at once harnessed to a brougham and drove me back to the warehouse. My cashier, who is the son of a farmer, always said he was a good judge of horses, and pronounced this one to be perfect. The owner said he had another gentleman coming to look at the horse, and I, to secure him, at once gave him a cheque for £60, the price asked, and made sure in my own mind that I had done well, as the man showed me an envelope, bearing a country post-mark, containing a receipt for £54, and a letter purporting to come from a clergyman, who had sold the horse, giving him the best of characters, and stating that he only sold him because his physician had recommended him to take horse exercise; the concluding part of the epistle thanking the man for the capital riding cob, which arrived safe by rail, in lieu of his old favourite, which he hoped would fall into good hands, for he was a good creature. Altogether the whole affair looked so genuine, and the man himself so very plausible in his manner, that I never for a moment suspected being in bad hands.

"I sent the horse to a livery stable, and a messenger to the villa for my man servant, who came by rail, and at once took my new purchase to a saddler, and had him fitted with a set of harness; he then fetched the new brougham which I had recently purchased from the coachmaker's, and we started for my villa, where I thought I would surprise my family with the long-talked-of and much-desired horse and brougham. Our way lay through Hammersmith; I sat on the box with the driver; the horse seemed to go very steady, but when we came to Turnham Green, Tom called my attention to what he described as the horse being a 'leetle groggy.'

"'What do you mean, Tom?' said I. 'You have not been giving him beer to drink before we started, have you?'

"'Oh, dear no,' said Tom. 'I mean that he appears to go a leetle tender before, though his legs appear straight and fresh enough for anything; I think it must be in his feet.'

"'What's in his feet?' said I.

"'Why, the cause of his going so near the ground, and so crappelly.'

"'What do you mean by crappelly? speak out, man, if you think anything is the matter with the horse,' said I.

"'Well, then,' said Tom, 'I believe he is a d——d screw.'

"'Not he, it is his way of going.'

"'I know that,' said Tom, with an ominous shake of the head, 'but we shall soon see, sir.'

"I was very uneasy, for the horse evidently got worse as we neared home, and when we arrived his feet were carefully examined, but we could see nothing to account for his excessive care in placing them on the ground, and Tom said his legs were free from blemishes and natural heat in every joint, so that he finally gave an opinion that the horse was shod too tight. After grooming and feeding, he was taken to the shoeing forge, where I accompanied him; his shoes were taken off in my presence, and would you believe it, sir, there was actually a pebble about the size of a pea inserted between one of his shoes and the sole of his foot.

"'I thought when he came into the forge that he was beaned, sir,' said the farrier to me.

"'What do you mean by being beaned?' I enquired, thinking the pebble had got there in travelling.

"'Why,' said the farrier, 'you have bought the horse from a coper; he is lame on the other foot, and this pebble was placed under the shoe of the sound foot to make him give way and go equal, and so disguise the lameness, which you will soon perceive exists on the other foot, when I have nailed the shoe on this again; but still he will not appear so lame now as after the effect of the pressure on the pebble is worn off.'

"After the shoe was replaced, the horse was trotted slowly over the stones, and sure enough the surmises of the farrier were too correct, for he was dead lame, and a veterinary surgeon pronounced him to be suffering from 'acute founder.' I sought, but never found the rascal from whom I bought him, and after keeping the horse for some time, I sold him for £3.

"And now, sir," said this victim of horse-coping to me, "what steps would you advise me to take in order to obtain a horse to suit me?"

"Well," said I, "you must go to a respectable licensed horse dealer, confess your ignorance, and trust to his honour to select you a sound horse suitable for your purpose, at a reasonable price, or buy a gingerbread one, and then, if you don't like him, you can eat him."

"I'll trot you for a 'fiver,' sir," said a dapper-looking country coper who was riding a very good sort of saddle cob, to a fresh-complexioned, elderly gentleman, well known to this coper's confederates as being very fond of fast trotting horses, but who knew the pace of this cob to be much more than an equal match for the best of the gentleman's stud, which was an aged chestnut with a docked tail of the old Bank of England stamp of other days, and upon which he was now mounted. These two individuals appeared to have met on the road casually. The coper being overtaken by the gentleman riding up at a slinging trot, and then taking his pace, they walked their horses side by side together. But in reality the meeting was planned by the gang for a purpose which will be seen in the sequel.

The elderly gentleman is as rich as a nabob, but, nevertheless, he thinks more of five sovereigns won by trotting, than he does of fifty made by any other means; and, moreover, on this particular morning he was inclined for a bit of a spin, for there was a fine bracing air, and his old favourite "Blazeaway" had just carried him about a mile from his princely mansion on his way to his model farm (which he visited every morning), at a rate that (like all other men afflicted with the trotting fever) Mr. S—— thought nothing could surpass, excepting, perhaps, Flora Temple, the American mare (of whom he had read), or a telegraphic message.

Most men who happen to own a horse of twelve or thirteen mile an hour pace, think, while riding or driving them, that "there is nothing in this country can lick 'em." "Why, they have trotted their animal from this place to that, with two in a gig, in an hour and three minutes, and they would like to know how far that is short of seventeen miles." Don't believe 'em, my friends, sixteen and seventeen miles an hour wants covering. It may not be too fast for Americans, for they are fast people, but our steady English sobersides will say it is too fast for them; they say, "S'pose the 'orse was to cum down, or the wheel cum off—oh smither 'em, they had rather go at the much safer pace of eight or ten miles an hour; it suits their book much better; it is not only less dangerous to themselves, but their horses' legs and carriage wheels wear so much longer. When one of these owners of only middling trotters (chiefly fast tradesmen, young in business, who have not been bankrupt or insolvent yet) is bragging about his tear-away tit in some bar parlour, when more than half-full of Jersey brandy, and a twopenny cigar between his teeth, you need not contradict him *point blank*—even when you know he is "throwing the hatchet," but you must just edge in sideways the remark, "Many a one would think *that* was an exaggeration;" never mind his being vexed, he will cool down again when you tell him that you believe every word he has spoken, but at the same moment mind you point the fore finger of your right hand over your left shoulder, and cheat the devil of the lie. But dear me, here I am, a mile from the crafty coper and his prey.

"Trot *my* horse for five pounds, did you say, young man?" replied the gentleman to the coper, eyeing over his cobely-looking animal.

"Yes, a 'tenner' if you like," said the coper.

"Are you in earnest?" said the same old gentleman, at the same moment tickling old Blazeaway with the spurs, who responded by shaking the two extremities of his body, as much as to say, "Be quiet, will you? let me alone."

"Yes, *I am* in earnest," said the coper.

"Very well," said Mr. S——, "I'll have you a spin for ten pounds, if you will trot *this morning* from *here* (the gates of Trafford park, on the Manchester and Altrincham road) to the 'Pelican' at Sale Moor—about two miles."

"Yes," said the coper, "I am ready *now*," and away they went without further ceremony. Mr. S—— "fired up" old Blazeaway with the persuaders, and sticking out his elbows at right angles, shook the reins and encouraged the game old animal with his voice. "Now, old boy, ga' lang," said he; the old favourite shook his head and dropped his ears alternately, poked out his nose, and expanded his capacious nostrils, as he took the lead and kept it for more than a mile. Mr. S—— was in high glee as he kept looking over his right shoulder, and winking his eyes (he has a habit of continually winking his eyes when excited), but his opponent was close in his wake and laughing now, for the steel is evidently out of old Blazeaway; his first effort is fast exhausting the resources of his wind—a little touched to start with—besides, he is too fat. Still the coper is courteous to his elderly opponents, and allows them the lead through Stretford village (the source of black pudding and pork), where Mr. S—— is well known.

"Hurrah! hurrah! for Mr. S——," shouted the children and their progenitors, as the clatter of the horses' feet is heard, and their riders were seen through a cloud of dust. "Ga' forred, ga' forred, little un, eawt ath, dust thou'll be smothered, mon," they said; the coper began to find this out too, and his cob and Blazeaway changed places opposite the Cock Inn on the outskirts of the village.

"Double the wager, sir," said the coper as he drew alongside Mr. S——; but the old gentleman only shook his head; and with a "good morning, sir, I'll order your horse a cordial at the Pelican," he pulled his hat firmly down in front, and eased his hands; the merry little cob answered like a cricket ball to the master hand of Caffyn, our glorious batsman, and left poor old Blazeaway reduced to dying embers. The coper was leading his cob gently about, although he had never twisted a hair, when Mr. S—— jogged in with poor old Blazeaway like a half-drowned rat.

"How much do you want for that cob?" said he to the coper.

"One hundred guineas, he's the best goer in England, sir. Your horse is an out-and-out goer, but you see this is a better," said the coper.

"Yes, he is, I must admit, and here are the ten sovereigns you have honestly won; and now if you will ask me a fair reasonable price for your cob I will buy him from you," said Mr. S——.

"Well, the lowest I can take is £100; he is an American bred horse, by Royal Morgan, out of the celebrated Sweeney mare, and I'm satisfied that nothing in England can leave him behind, either in or out of harness; he's as fast and as game a horse as ever stood on iron," said the coper.

"Did Barnum bring him over?" enquired Mr. S——, laughing.

"Upon my honour, sir, I have told you the truth, and

I can refer you to the gentleman who bought him in New York; he was sold to settle a dispute, and the gentleman bought him on speculation, and me and my brothers bought him the day after he landed, from the same gentleman, who is over on a visit to Liverpool," said the coper.

The cob was really a good and sound animal, and an extraordinary trotter, and, independent of his trotting qualities, was worth £40 or £50 for a gentleman's riding hack. Mr. S—— is by no means a bad judge of horses, and he knew—after a careful examination—that he should not be wide of the mark to give a hundred for him, more especially as he could bring him out on the sly, and astonish some of his trotting friends in Manchester. For money is not so much an object with the merchants there, when they wish to gratify any particular hobby. I know a timber merchant in Manchester, who (five years ago) gave three hundred guineas for a trotting horse, a chestnut, and yet this gentleman (Mr. Kearsley) never would match him for a shilling, he kept him solely as a hobby. An ex-mayor gave one hundred and twenty pounds for a bay horse, bought at Rotherham fair by a Derbyshire dealer in 1853 for eighteen sovereigns; the horse was then six years old, but it never was known up to this period that he was more than an average goer. I rode him myself the first time, when he covered a mile in three minutes and a half! the second time he was ridden by a friend of mine, and he covered the same ground in three minutes and ten seconds. I rode him again the following day, over the same ground, four times, with intervals of rest between, and he improved his pace every time, until the last time he covered the mile in two minutes and fifty seconds; he was trained, and afterwards trotted a mile in two minutes and forty seconds—when he was sold to his present owner, who has regularly ridden him as a hack to and from business.

It was about this time that the incident occurred which forms the subject of this chapter. Mr. S—— had been beaten with these new-catched trotting horses, and he fondly hoped that, by purchasing the cob, he should turn the laugh against them, therefore he finally bought him for one hundred pounds, and told the coper to bring him to his residence in the afternoon, gave him a crown to fasten the deal, and told him to keep the matter secret. "For then I shall be able to take the nonsense out of a few of my friends," said he.

The coper, true to his time, appeared with the cob, and received his money.

"I want no warranty," said Mr. S——, "it is only bad judges and old women who require warranties with horses. Now what ground do you think this cob can really cover in an hour?" said he to the coper.

"Well, sir," replied he, "I really don't know, for we never timed him; but he *can* go a *burster,* sir."

"How far do you call a 'burster?'" said Mr. S——.

"Why, an extraordinary pace," said this wily coper.

"Do you think he's as fast as 'Sir William?'"

"Who's Sir William?" said the coper.

"Why, the old American horse that trotted eighteen miles within the hour, on Knutsford race course; you must have heard of him," said Mr. S——.

"Oh! yes; you mean Roger Bowring's horse of Pendleton; why, a deal depends how he is ridden. Now, this cob wont go near so fast with *you* for the first week or two, as he went with me to-day, you see; for *one* thing, *you* are a heavier man, and you will not have the knack of keeping him together until *he gets accustomed* to *your hands,* therefore I should advise you to keep him dark a week or two, until you are sure that you are able to get his fastest pace out of him. So I wish you good day, sir, for I'm off to Ireland to-night. I will call upon you when I come back, and see how you like him," said the coper, as he took his departure.

Mr. S—— rode his new purchase to the farm on the following day, but his trotting fever considerably abated, when, after sending him along at the top of his speed, all that he could squeeze out of him, amidst whipping, spurring, fretting, and breaking, was a mile in *six minutes.* "He's not accustomed to my hands yet," said he to himself. Morning after morning the cob was tried, but a mile in *five minutes* was all that could be got out of him, after a month's riding, timeing, and nursing.

Old Blazeaway was a well-known fifteen mile an hour horse, and in the two-mile match Mr. S—— reasonably thought that, although not in trotting trim, he would at least go in the match at Stretford twelve miles an hour, or at the rate of a mile in five minutes, and he was completely bewildered, as may be imagined; for, in the two mile stretch at Stretford, he went by old Blazeaway like a rifle ball, but now the old horse could beat his opponent a mile in five.

My readers will also wonder how this could be, and it is time to inform them that the cob delivered to Mr. S—— was not the same that the coper trotted against old Blazeaway for ten pounds and sold to his victim. The gang had two of these cobs, as near alike as possible, and none but parties who knew them well could tell one from the other when seen separate. The one delivered to Mr. S—— had cost £24 at Stockport fair, rather more than his value, because he was a match for the "Trotting Doctor," the name given to the real Simon Pure, because of the number of patients he had cured of the "trotting fever," and, in this case, his professional attendance upon Mr. S—— cost that gentleman eighty-six pounds. But although his charges were high, his patients had the advantage of being permanently cured of that infectious malady, the "trotting fever."

A few years ago, an Irish horse-coper brought a string of the best-looking screws across the Channel that I ever saw together. They were all well made, well bred, and in superb condition, and for two or three weeks previous to their arrival in England they were advertised in the Liverpool and Manchester papers as the property of an Irish nobleman, to be sold by auction without reserve, at a livery yard, situate among the densely-packed warehouses in Manchester. Great preparations were made by the proprietor of the yard, the stables were whitewashed, and the boxes bedded down knee-deep in clean straw, the front of the yard was plastered over with large bills, and neatly-arranged catalogues were freely circulated, and many sent by post, to the most horsey merchants in Manchester and adjacent districts.

An auctioneer was engaged, who, although a man well up in the ways of the world, and of strict integrity, knew as much about a horse as a fish knows of its grandmother; but his respectability and standing in society made a capital passport for the copers to the pocket of his victims. The livery-stable keeper knew as much, and no more, than the auctioneer about horses, and when questioned about the owner, he winked and shook his head.

"The fact is," said he, "the nob has done the pace too fast, and is obliged to pull up; but the horses must be sold—there will be no reserve."

The day before the sale took place, this herd of cripples, numbering twenty-eight, were landed from one of the Dublin steamers at Liverpool. They were all clothed in complete suits of one pattern, marked with the initials "L. K." The clothing had been bought for the purpose and soiled, to make it appear as if it had been more or less in wear; thus, with the knee-caps and bandages, the screws were packed as carefully as Egyptian mummies. Railway boxes were engaged at Lime Street, and it was arranged to send them by a train which arrived at Victoria Station, Manchester, about twelve o'clock, the time when the merchants would be in and about the Exchange (where the horses must pass on their way to the mart).

The screws were every one led separately (by men engaged for the purpose) in Indian file, about a couple of yards from head to tail, and, as may be supposed, they created no small sensation among the country manufacturers and merchants on 'Change. Manchester men are fond of "bargains," and those who are in the staple trade there have generally money in their pockets, or they know where to get it at very short notice; and, although I know some sporting writers of the present day who sneer at the idea of the Manchester school, as they term it, knowing anything about a horse, yet I can assure them that there are many Manchester men who ride as good horses, and are quite as much at home in the pigskin, as the best of London gentlemen; and let those who cherish a contrary opinion gird up their loins, and take a turn with the "Cheshire," among the bulfinches or the rasping stone walls, to be met with at every hundred yards in the countries hunted by the Oldham, Disley, or High Peak Harriers, and I am sure they will come away convinced that "Manchester men" are indeed "men," in every sense of the word, and not to be sneezed at, just because they make their money out of cotton and calico.

However, many of these Manchester men, in common with four London and eleven Liverpool gentlemen, were "jockied" to an unheard-of extent in the great "horse auction swindle" at Manchester; even a 'cute dealer from the West-end of London came down and bought two of these cripples, for which he gave £110, one of which was lame in the shoulder, and the other subject to staggers, and died in the stall soon after he arrived in London.

A cold, damp November fog ushered in the day of sale. The auctioneer mounted his rostrum at eleven o'clock, and made a sort of speech to the numerous and respectable assemblage. I could not hear *all* he said, but he tried to look as pompous as possible, and commenced with something about being commissioned by the agent of an Irish peer, well-known on the turf, whose racing-stud had recently been sold at Tattersall's, and who was now reluctantly compelled, by misfortune, and a chain of adverse circumstances, which he could not explain, to offer his stud of splendid hunters and hacks for sale. He was instructed by the agent to say that the horses were all sound, with the exception of a bay mare, which had caught a little "sea cough" *in transitu* across the Channel; in fact, the unsound and "amiss" horses had been sold or turned out in Ireland, the expense being too great to bring them over at the risk of not being able to sell them.

To these preliminary remarks the auctioneer added that the horses would be sold to the highest bidder, who must pay for them at the fall of the hammer, as the agent had to be in Ireland on the following day, and the cash being urgently required, the lots would be sold without the "least reserve." The staff of "touters" were posted here and there in the crowd, to bid and run up the prices. The sale commenced in earnest. The horses were shown in a narrow carriage-way, forming the entrance from a busy thoroughfare to the yard. This was prepared for the crippled feet of the screws with a deep bed of litter from the dung-heap, and over that again plenty of clean straw, to hide side bones and sand cracks, by burying the feet in the straw. A smart, active-looking roan horse, clipped, and in good condition, was led from his box on to the litter, to the end of which he was led by the groom at a *quiet walk*, who then trotted him back, and placed him in front of the rostrum. Twenty pounds, five-and-twenty, thirty, and thirty-five were the offers, until they reached sixty-five for the roan gelding and his clothing (the clothing of every horse was sold with them), and in less than two hours every horse, including the one with a "sea cough," was sold.

The victims were pleased with the new style of showing the horses; there was none of that whipping, shouting, and scrambling out of the way of their heels, so common at some repositories, where the horse is seldom permitted to show a distinct pace of walk, trot, or canter; and here I shall observe that, notwithstanding few, even of the most finished connoisseurs in horse-flesh, will close a bargain for a saddle-horse until they have seen him "walk," I do not know one single horsebazaar in the kingdom (and I have seen business done at many) where the proprietors check their "whippers-up" in the foolish practice of punishing and frightening the horse about to be offered the moment he emerges from the stable, to the danger and disgust of many gentlemen who would otherwise be purchasers; for when so alarmed and punished, it is not in the nature of a high-couraged horse to make the most of himself (as some erroneously suppose), because he cannot settle down to his paces, and perform them with anything like confidence, while a fellow is torturing him from behind with a long whip, and another is continually checking up his head with a deep-levered, jaw-breaking, curb bridle. For the horse is then much in the same position as a man would be were he in a narrow lane, with a high wall on each side, the sea before him, and the devil behind him. In fact, all that the bystanders can see of a horse at some repositories is a series of hops, skips, and jumps.

In making these remarks, I do not wish in any way to insinuate that no good or cheap horses can be bought at horse bazaars; on the contrary, I know that many first-class horses change hands at these places. But in these cases the purchasers generally know more of the horses they buy than it is possible for them to ascertain while they are writhing and contorting their forms in fear and agony under the loud cracking and keen cutting whip, in the hands of the man employed for the purpose.

Gentlemen, and all good judges of horses, like to see them in their *natural* state, and free from excitement, caused by artificial means. In fact, they wish to see them as they are likely to appear at their own stables, after purchase. But even at the establishments of many most respectable dealers it is a common practice, when showing a horse to a customer, to cut him with a whip, or rattle a hat behind him, when he is in the midst of a nice steady trot, and this instantly causes a high-couraged horse, when fresh in condition, to break his pace, and jump with his hind toes close up to his fore feet; thus the natural steady business-like action is suddenly transformed into a succession of antics similar to the irregular gambols of a young bear.

The indiscriminate use of ginger is also to be strongly condemned. Indeed, there is no real use in its application at all, it only tends to mislead the customer by producing a false appearance. For the effect is transient, and does more harm than good, by creating dissatisfaction and unpleasantness between dealer and purchaser, when the horse is seen in its true colours at the stable of his new master, who always did and always will prefer natural to artificial courage and false appearances. Indeed, men of common sense need not be told that the more natural courage a horse has in him, the less need has he for the application of the means above described to produce artificial appearances.

All this was well known to the experienced Irish coper, who acted as the assumed agent of an Irish peer.

He had studied human nature as well as horse nature. The whole transaction was divested of anything like professional horse-dealing; and many of his victims thought they were making a good thing out of him, because he did not know how to make the most of his master's horses, or was not sufficiently interested to do so. The result was that the horses found customers as fast as they were brought out of their boxes. And the agent appearing so very green completely allayed suspicion, if any ever existed, as to the sale being a *bona fide* affair. The sale realised upwards of a thousand pounds (the average value of the screws was about £10 each), and, after paying the auctioneer and livery-stable keeper, the agent shook hands with them both, and said he was off to Liverpool to catch a Dublin steamer that evening; but he got into a Stockport omnibus and rode to Stockport, and from thence proceeded to London, where he arrived the same evening.

He had only one confederate; the "touters" were only engaged for the day. The confederate went to Dublin, whence he telegraphed, in the name of the agent, to the auctioneer, to be kind enough to go to the inn where he had slept in Manchester, and fetch a rug (which had been *purposely* left there), and make it up in a parcel, and direct it to an address in Limerick. This dodge sent several victims to Ireland after the agent; for, as may be imagined, there was a regular "hubbub" raised among some of the dupes in the course of a few days after the sale. Others, more wise, kept their folly to themselves. Most of these screws were more or less unsound in their wind, some quite broken-winded, some roarers, others were lame in the shoulder, or had navicular disease; many were as old as "men," but none were spavined, and none had either curbs or splints. There were no *visible* infirmities worth naming among the whole lot, and the ruse of selling them at a place where there was no room to run them on the stones was only discovered when too late.

All the badly broken-winded horses were so skilfully "set" that they would have baffled the judgment of a practised hand, if he had pinched the windpipe and thus caused the horses to cough, to enable him to ascertain, by the peculiar sound, whether the wind was right or not.

CHAPTER VI.

PATRICK DUNLEVY. — THE QUEEN OF HEARTS. — THE MANCHESTER SEPTEMBER MEETING.—THE GRIFFIN. —THE TWINS. — FALSE IMPRISONMENT. — HEAVY DAMAGES.—MR. DOUBLE-SHUFFLE.—A GREEN HAND. —THE LETTER.—DIPLOMACY.—DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.—NO EFFECTS. — THE BREWER'S TRAVELLER. —THE MANAGER.—VERY DEAR HAY.—A NARROW ESCAPE. — DUSTY BOB. — THE WAGER. — A NEAT TRICK.—THE TRAVELLER DONE.

PATRICK DUNLEVY, the assumed agent of an Irish peer, cleared upwards of £600 by his horse auction at Manchester, exclusive of expenses; and suspecting that he would, in all probability, be wanted, and sought for at the various fairs for some time to come, he thought it best to avoid such places. He also considered it prudent to change his mode of getting money, style of dress, cut of whiskers, &c. And the badly fitting suit of grey frieze, and broad-brimmed hat that enveloped the body of the agent at Manchester was given away to one of his poor countrymen in London, and Mr. Patrick Dunlevy was now attired in tight-fitting Bedford-cord trousers, a Newmarket coat, with a long-cut buttoned-up-to-throat waistcoat, of some kind of thunder-and-lightning pattern; the suit being surmounted by a low-crowned hat, very much turned up at the sides.

Mr. Dunlevy had made up his mind to buy a few second-class race horses, and travel with them to the minor race meetings when the flat race season commenced; and in the mean time he would lay by—for it was only Christmas, and he had more sense than to risk his money in steeple-chases. For, said he, so many of 'em tumble and never get up again.

During this interval he was joined in his lodgings in Camden Town by his Irish confederate, Denny O'Byrne, who was better up in racing matters than himself, and the brace managed to pick up half-a-dozen "leather flappers," of more than average merit for second-rate horses. The best of them, the "Queen of Hearts," cleared the cost of the whole, the second time she ran—all the others being squared, and their owners making more than the value of the stakes by the betting alone; and Dunlevy was, on the whole (with Dunny's assistance), very fortunate. They bought a better class of horses, and entered them at better meetings, for much higher stakes.

Nearly two years had now elapsed since the "Horse auction swindle," and Mr. Dunlevy, thinking that all had blown over, made up his mind to enter two of his horses to run at the Manchester September Meeting. Denny O'Byrne was sent on, in charge of the horses, the day before the races were commenced. They were stabled at the Griffin Inn, near the race-course. There is a nice bowling green at the Griffin, frequented by the most respectable class of gentlemen who reside in the

Belgravia of Manchester, Higher and Lower Broughton.

These gentlemen, however, on this particular evening were more interested in watching the arrival of racehorses, and discussing their merits, than in their customary pastime on the bowling-green. Amongst this party was one of the "agent's" many victims, who had given £58 for a "roarer" at the sale, and when his eyes rested upon the visage of Denny, they flashed with excitement, wonder, and surprise. Denny noticed this, but still did not recognise the gentleman as one of the purchasers at the sale. He, however, thought there was danger in the wind, and became alarmed.

"Whose horses are these, my man?" said the victim.

Denny.—"Mr. Dunlevy's, sur."

Victim.—"Was Mr. Dunlevy ever in Manchester before?"

Denny.—"Th'roth 'an he was, sur."

Victim.—"Were you with him when he sold a lot of horses by action in Manchester?"

Denny.—"Yes, sur, but I had nothing to do wid that business."

Victim.—"I didn't say you had; they belonged to an Irish nobleman, I think, if I remember right."

Denny.—"Yes, sur."

Victim.—"Well, I bought a horse at that sale, which turned out very well, and I want another to carry me with hounds this season; I am very partial to Irish horses, and perhaps your master would not object to assist me in the purchase of one, if I paid him well for his trouble. When will he be here?"

Denny.—"To-morrow morning, sur, about eleven."

And the victim walked triumphantly away. Denny locked up his horses, and walked up to the Commercial Inn to Dunlevy, who had arrived in Manchester, and determined to risk the chances of detection. Denny related the particulars of his interview with the "swell," as he called the victim.

"And now, Dunlevy, my boy, off wid you from this, for sure there's danger in staying."

"Well, but what's to be done?" said Dunlevy; "the horses must run."

"Throth an' they must, an' one of them must win too, me boy. Will you lave it all to me?" said Denny.

"Not all, Denny; I'll tell you what we'll do. You know Mick, don't you?" said Dunlevy.

"Does a duck swim?" said Denny.

(Michael Dunlevy was a dealer in smuggled, or rather, illicit distilled whiskey, and Ireland was too warm for his health. His trade was carried on through the medium of Irish reapers in harvest time, who carried it from place to place, and sold it to the farmers and second-rate public-houses, as being smuggled by them from Ireland. The ground covered by his travellers was part of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire. He lived at a small village near Macclesfield; but at the time of the "horse auction," he was in Knutsford Gaol, having been convicted of illicit distillation; but his brother Patrick had generously paid the penalty, £25, after his luck at Manchester, and set him free.)

"Well now, Mick must stand in my shoes to-morrow, for you know we were twins, and as like each other as two 'pays,'" said Dunlevy.

The business was discussed and settled. Dunlevy went to his twin brother, and sent him well-togged as a turfman to Machester races (only a distance of ten miles from where he resided). The victim and a solicitor were waiting for his arrival, and at half-past eleven Mickey arrived at the Griffin, and played his part as owner of the race-horses.

The victim pointed him out to the lawyer.

"That's him," said he, "I could swear to him among a thousand men."

The lawyer approached Micky, and offered him a piece of paper, which he took. "Your name is Dunlevy, I presume?" said the lawyer.

"Thrue for you, that's my name," said Micky.

"Patrick Dunlevy, I suppose?"

Mick.—"Divil a Pat—my name is Michael Dunlevy."

Lawyer.—"You know this gentleman," (pointing to the victim.)

"Mr. Dunlevy, surely you remember selling a lot of unsound horses by auction, in Manchester, last November but one. That is a writ for £55. The horse was a 'roarer,'—which you knew very well. He was sold by public auction for £11 10s., and with expenses, our claim is £55; and if you don't know us——"

"We'll soon make you know us," said the lawyer, as he walked away with the victim.

"Sure an' I niver sold a gentleman a horse in Manchester in my life, and to blazes wid you 'an your paper an' all!" said Mick, as he tore up the writ, and tossed it in the air, like a swarm of butterflies.

Patrick Dunlevy attended the race meetings as usual, but was never seen conversing with Mick and Denny. Mick was followed from place to place by the lawyer, who in due course served the declaration, and when the term of grace expired, the Queen of Hearts and the Maid of Kilkenny, the only two horses with them then, were seized in execution, and sold for little more than paid the expenses of the sale, and finally Micky, who purposely kept in the way, was arrested and taken to Lancaster Castle, but he paid the debt and was liberated. His turn now came, and he sued the victim for the illegal distraint on the two racers, and for false imprisonment. The case was tried at Liverpool; Micky proved that he was in Knutsford Gaol at the time the sale took place, and therefore could not, at that time and place, have represented the agent of an Irish peer, in Manchester. The jury awarded damages, £100 each for the two horses, and £100 for the false imprisonment, with costs. "We'll make you know us," said Micky to the lawyer, as he jostled against him on leaving the court.

This, I trust, may be a lesson to those who are cheated by horse copers with no fixed residence, to sit down quietly with the first loss, for it is most assuredly the least.

I remember a kind of horse-coping, half-betting, regular "fly-fellow," taking up his abode in a populous town where I then resided; no one knew from whence he came, and he took very good care not to tell anyone.

The nature of my business frequently led me to a respectable inn, kept by a well-known dealer in first-class horses, which was also patronized by this worthy; many readers of sporting papers would know the man I am describing, were I to write one of his names, for he had many, but none, perhaps, was more appropriate than the one given him one night at the inn, after a clever dodge at cards, and that was Double-shuffle; he was a man of considerable astuteness, and well he might be; his forte, like that of many others, being to get money by any means, provided he could steer clear of the criminal law. Double-shuffle—to those who knew no better—passed as a gentlemanly sort of man, with a very good address; he lived in respectable furnished lodgings, had a wife, or mistress, who dressed rather extravagantly; she was at least fifteen stone weight; and her figure belonging to the style known in the country as "dumpy."

Double-shuffle always had a few horses, or rather screws, standing for sale at a livery stable, and was always on the look out for a flat. In one instance the flat came from York, where he was formerly well-known as a "Dealer in Horses," but not being very well up in his business, he entered into another; still, however, he continued to deal, or rather dabble, a little in horses. He came over to M——, and Double-shuffle came across him at the inn before referred to. In course of conversation, our coping hero asked him to come up and look at his stud, amongst which was a very handsome bay horse, once the property of the Earl of Wilton. This horse was sound, but no farrier could shoe him without first casting and hobbling him; few men could mount him in saddle, and fewer still could ride him, if ever they succeeded in mounting him; in short, the horse, although full of fashion, breeding, and quality, was valueless; but Double-shuffle had worn a "tenner" over him, for the express purpose of teaching some one a lesson how to buy horses.

Mr. H——, of York, thought he would be just the thing to carry a young gent, whose inclination led him towards a pack of harriers, kept in the neighbourhood, and who employed Mr. H—— to buy him a suitable horse for his first essay in the hunting-field. Double-shuffle said he had certainly bought the horse a bargain, and would sell him again as such. Eighty guineas were boldly asked, and the horse finally sold for seventy guineas. A warranty of soundness and perfect freedom from vice was given, and the horse was shortly on his way to York, whither Mr. H—— accompanied him. A day or two elapsed, and I was taking a glass of pale ale at the bar of the inn aforesaid, when the landlord entered. "Good morning," said he; "I have just received a letter from that gentleman who bought the horse from Double-shuffle; here it is," handing me the following letter:—

"York, ——

"My dear Sir,—The horse I bought from the scoundrel whom I met with at your house is a perfect devil. I sent him to be shod this morning, but the lad who mounted him, by a leg up on the blanket, for the purpose of riding him to the forge, was immediately thrown over the brute's head, and his skull fractured. I afterwards directed a man to lead him there, which he managed to do, but not without a deal of trouble; but when the farrier approached with his box of tools, within range of his heels, he sent them out and broke three of the poor fellow's ribs. I have therefore concluded to send him back by the 20 past 3 train to-morrow; and if you will send a trusty man to the station for him, and keep him at your stables until you get me the money back, I will pay you all charges and expenses, and you will render me a service.

"I am, my dear sir, yours faithfully,
"G—— H——."

"Well, what do you think of that business?" said the innkeeper to me. "I have sent for Double-shuffle, and I expect him here presently, and he shall see the letter."

"I should do nothing of the kind," said I, "for the language is too strong. You will have to go quietly and warily to work with him to get the money back."

"Oh! but I'll show him the letter, and see what he says; there can be no harm in that," said my friend.

"As you please," said I. "Here he is, by Jove."

"Morning, gentlemen," said Double-shuffle

"Good morning," said the innkeeper; "read this letter."

Double-shuffle reads. "Oh! scoundrel, he calls me, does he. I'll teach him better than to call a respectable man a 'scoundrel.' Give me a nip of whisky, cold. D—n his Yorkshire eyes! I'll be even with him, for I'll bring an action for defamation; I'll make him prove his words, that I will."

"Well, if you do that you will be a scoundrel," said I.

"Oh, you be d—d! mind your own affairs; I know what I'm about. Scoundrel—ah! well, that's good. Good morning, gentlemen," said Double, as he shuffled out of the bar.

"What do you think of the seventy guineas, and the horse's box to and from York, now?" said I to my friend.

"I wish poor H—— had it," said he.

The time arrived to send the man to the station for the horse, but when he arrived there he found Double-shuffle and his man waiting for the train. In obedience to instructions, Double's man walked up to the other and asked him to an inn, near the station gates; he was waiting for a horse coming by the same train, but it would not arrive while they were away; and if it did, the horses would stand in the boxes until they were ready to lead them home. The ruse took; and when the train arrived, in the men's absence Mr. Double led the horse to his own stable and locked him up. "It's no use being called a scoundrel for nothing," said he to himself.

The man went home and told his master the truth. Double had signed the book at the station and taken charge of the horse for my friend, to whom it was directed by a card attached to the body-roller, as also entered in his name in the way-bill.

"Tear-an'-ages, what's to be done now? I'll send for the police and have him arrested for obtaining the horse under false pretences," said the inkeeper to me.

"Yes! that would be as clever as showing him the letter," said I, "for if he had never seen the letter the horse would have been in your stable instead of his; not that it matters much where he is, for he's not worth a week's keep."

"What would you do, if you were me?" said my friend.

"It must be a case of diamond cut diamond," said I. "Will you leave it to me, and I'll try to get the horse back or another better?"

"Agreed," said my friend.

It wanted about five days to Doncaster Races, and I knew Double-shuffle would go there. His confidential servant, Jack, was always left in charge of the screws, with power to sell, while he was away at the various race meetings. Jack, although a clever fellow, was very fond of drink; but nothing delighted him better than to catch a flat, and have a "deal" while his master was away.

The day after Double went away I sent a confidential friend (not resident in the town) to Double's stables, with proper instructions.

"You have some horses here for sale, I understand," said he to Jack, who hitched up his breeches, and touched his cap with his forefinger.

"Yessir," said Jack.

"Where's your master?" said the gentleman.

"Donkisser," said Jack; "but I can show them and sell them too."

There were four of these beautiful screws, all in separate boxes; the bay horse, the subject of dispute, stood in the corner box. A rakish-looking brown blood mare stood next to him; she had navicular disease in her cobbly-looking, contracted feet. An ewe-necked, snig-bellied looking thing, with four white legs and a bald face, which Jack said was by Harkaway, and another miserable-looking d—l, whose sire might have been Accident, and dam Misfortune, with splints on both fore-shanks overlapping the knee-joints, and the scars of both old and recent marks of speedy-cut inside the shanks, as well as brushing on the fetlock joints, both before and behind, completed the stud of Double-shuffle.

"I want something to carry me quietly in saddle; and if you will pick me out one that is likely to suit me, if I buy it and like it, I will make you a present. I live at S——, my name is R——; your master, I think, would know me. What is this brown mare?" said he.

"A very good mare, sir—a *very* good mare—and perfectly quiet in saddle. Will you get on her back a few yards, sir?'

"Thank you; I cannot ride to-day, for I have sprained my knee-joint." This is just the thing for Jack; he is glad the gentleman is not able to ride to-day.

"What is this horse in the corner?" said he.

"That horse, sir, is one master bought from the Earl of Wilton, who is reducing his stud; we call him Wilton. He is a splendid saddle-horse—so quiet, yet so showy, and such a beautiful mouth. I rode him from Heaton-park in a saddle that did not fit him—he is so high in his withers—and the saddle-tree has slightly galled him; so master said he would keep him until he got all right again, which he will be in a day or two, as the skin is not broke—you see, sir, only slightly bruised. Master ordered me not to put a saddle on him, or I should have liked to have shown him to you mounted. He is a splendid animal; but I think master has a customer for him, when he is ready to ride and show."

"How much do you want for him, if I take him as he is, with all his faults?"

"Eighty guineas, sir, is his price; and if he was in London, one hundred and fifty would be asked. I have lived in London, and have seen many worse horses sold for that sum."

"Come, now, suppose I give you a pound or two for yourself, what is the lowest your master will be content with?"

"Well, sir," said Jack, "if you will stand a 'fiver,' you shall have him for seventy guineas."

"Very well, I'll have him; bring him down to the —— Hotel, in an hour from now, and I'll pay you for him. My man will meet you there, and take charge of him."

The hour passed, and Jack led the identical bay horse into the hotel yard. I was watching all that was passing through the lathes of a Venetian blind A man in livery met Jack, and "kicked" him for something for himself.

"Wait till I get the rhino," said Jack, in great glee.

My friend, the innkeeper, had provided me with a blank cheque, which I gave to our confederate, who had it ready filled up for £78 10s., when Jack was ushered into his presence, in a private room at the hotel.

"Well, you have brought the horse, I suppose."

"Yessir," said Jack.

"Well, here is a cheque for £78 10s., which includes the £5 I promised you. Now you are sure this horse is perfectly sound, and quiet to ride?"

"Oh, yessir! as nice an animal as ever was shod, I assure you."

"Well, we shall see," said my friend, as Jack retired from the room, and scampered off to the bank with the cheque.

It was, however, a considerable distance, and there was ample time for the "man in livery" to lead the horse to the stables, where he ought to have been the day he came by rail from York, before Jack laid his cheque on the bank-counter to be told there were "no effects."

"'No effects!!' I don't want 'effects.' I want £78 10s."

"Nobody of that name has an account here.

"Oh, that be d—d! How! What! How the d—l is that?" and then the truth suddenly flashed across his mind, he had been sold himself, and given the horse away. He strongly suspected where the horse was, but could obtain no clue, as the dealing innkeeper and myself only laughed at him. Double-shuffle returned home after the races, made a great bounce and bother; but the horse was sold by public auction, and scarcely realised the expenses. Mr. H——, of York, reduced the debt to £50, to bring it within the jurisdiction of the county court. The judge ordered it to be paid by twelve monthy instalments, but Mr. Double shuffled out of the country before the first instalment became due; and so Mr. H——was shuffled and copered out of seventy York guineas, which one would think (from the difficulty in getting hold of them by these means in that country) ought at least to be worth seven hundred in any other.

I knew a brewer's traveller, who resided in one of the most populous towns of the midland counties. He was a thorough go-ahead sort of fellow, who could get orders in his particular line where some milk-and-water sort of travellers would have starved. He drove a remarkably fast-trotting bay mare, in brown harness, attached to a neat light-built gig. His attire was decidedly of the horsey character. It consisted of Bedford-cord trousers made very tight, cut-away coat, &c.,

&c., which savoured more of the country horse-dealer than of his own business, and nothing pleased him better than a spin on the road in a trotting match for a few pounds, or a transaction in horse flesh with some fast tradesman or horse dealer, and, though not much of a judge, he was generally lucky in the purchase and sale of horses.

Besides his business as a traveller on salary and commission for an extensive brewery firm, he was the proprietor of a livery stable, and let hacks for hire under saddle and in harness. This department of his business was managed by a man from whom he had bought the business and lease of premises, and who had saved so much by being a master as enabled him to commence business as a servant. This man had a superabundance of low cunning, but no common sense. With it (as is the case but too commonly with many others of the same sort) all was fish that came to his net; and this had been his ruin, for no one who did business with him once would do so a second time. For instance, he would receive a horse to livery at an agreed sum of one guinea a-week, but when the bill was rendered there would be an extra charge of five shillings a-week for grooming, and a shilling now and then for an alterative or a cordial-ball, when the horse had never had them. Sometimes gentlemen would send horses to livery with a view to sell them, and advertising them in the papers to be seen at his stables. In this case he would (when a customer applied to see the horse) shake his head significantly, and "crab" it—*i. e.,* say that it was unsound, or had some fault; and this he did for the mere purpose of keeping the horse at livery to his own advantage and profit.

This is a prevalent practice everywhere, especially in London. Many other disreputable things, similar to these, sent him to the Insolvent Court, where (having sold his business, and pocketted the money) he was required to give it up to the assignees for the benefit of his creditors, and received his discharge. Being turned upon the streets almost in a destitute condition, the brewer's traveller, out of pity, appointed him as a manager in his old quarters, but required him to lay aside every low, quirking trick, and manage the concern in a fair, business-like manner.

A short time in this capacity, however, sufficed to finish his career, for he was detected as being privy to a systematic robbery (practised, more or less, in many places) in the sale and purchase of hay, which, for the information of horse-keepers, I shall describe. In this instance the manager always bought his hay from one hay-dealer, or salesman (not a farmer), and having twenty horses at work, he was a good customer; the hay was of good quality, bought at a market price, and weighed at the town's weighing machine.

The proprietor never suspected anything wrong until a singular circumstance revealed and exposed the whole plot. It was in the winter of 1853-54, when the price of good old hay rose from £4 to £10 a ton, in consequence of the vast quantities being bought by Government and shipped to the Crimea, that the swindle was extensively carried on. In the centre of the load of hay was left a hole sufficiently large to hold the body of an extra-sized man, who ensconced himself therein until the hay was sold and weighed; the trusses being so arranged that the man could breathe freely, and yet no person could, by the appearance of the load, ever suspect that a man was concealed among the trusses.

In this instance, the man weighed upwards of eighteen stone, being 2¼ cwt., which, at £10 per ton, made the swindle amount to 22s. 6d. the load, as the consumption was two loads, of about a ton, each week.

The hay being always bought by the single load, so as to give them the opportunity of weighing the same man in each, the proprietor, by these means alone, was swindled out of £2 5s. every week. The man weighed with the hay used to get down from the load between the weighing machine and the stable, at a signal from the driver, when the course was clear; and so this little game was carried on for a long time, until one day the man never answered to the signal, and it being known that he was in liquor—in fact, drunk—when he went on duty, it was feared that he had fallen asleep, and might be suffocated among the hay.

The driver mounted the load and cleared away the trusses, when the man was discovered black in the face, and all but dead; he was sent to the hospital, and fearing death, confessed all, and implicated many others besides the manager of the livery-stable keeper—in fact, there were but few gentlemen in the neighbourhood who had not—through their grooms—bought and paid for this man by weight many times over.

The result of this business was the forfeiture of a sum of money by the hay salesman to the proprietor, which was preferred as more profitable than a prosecution, and the dismissal of the manager, who now was turned completely adrift, shunned and despised by everybody who knew him. He had, however, as I have said before, a superabundance of low cunning, and very soon after the occurrence of the above events, he left the town and allied himself to a gang of trotting copers, by whose assistance he concocted another scheme to swindle his late generous and forgiving master, the brewer's traveller.

The scoundrel knew, to the second, in what time the bay mare, before alluded to, could trot a mile at her most clipping pace—viz., three and a-half minutes; but the trotting copers possessed a horse they called Dusty Bob, that could trot a mile in considerably less than three minutes, and getting the necessary information from their new man as to the whereabouts of the traveller on a certain day, two of them started with Dusty Bob harnessed to a gig, to the rendezvous, and awaited his coming; and in due time up he dashed with the bay mare at a spanking pace, and pulled up opposite the bar-parlour window of the inn, where the two copers sat, one of whom had alighted from the gig a few hundred yards from the inn, and walked into the house as if he were a perfect stranger to the other. This one accosted the traveller with—

"A nice mare you are driving, sir; she looks like trotting," said he.

"Yes, she's a fair goer, sir—a very fair goer," said the traveller.

There were several more people in the parlour at the time, one being the butcher, who lived hard by, and who knew the traveller well from the fact of his always treating him when he called at that house, and also from a little similarity in their tastes, especially in trotting matters. At this juncture the landlord entered, and after shaking hands with the traveller, they retired; the footsteps of the landlord were immediately heard on the stairs, and in another minute or two he descended, a brief interval elapsed, when the pen and inkstand were fetched from a shelf in the bar, then a rattling of gold and silver was heard in the distance, and all was over but a low murmuring, which sounded very like kilderkins, barrels, ale, porter, empty casks, &c., &c. But while all this was going on in the little snuggery, the conversation between the butcher and coper had commenced; mildly enough at first, it is true, but it had now waxed very warm about the respective merits of the bay mare. The coper thought his old "bag of bones" in the stable could trot faster. The butcher strongly advocated the traveller's opinion, with the addition of sundry thumps of his mutton fist on the table, that there was "nothing in this country" could lick the mare; "Midland Pride," he called her.

The traveller now entered. This was the last calling place; he had been lucky that day both in money and orders, and a common observer, who knew the man, could see it in his beaming countenance.

"Now, Sam, what's all this row about, my boy?" said he to the butcher; and, turning to the landlord, "Bring a bottle of sherry," he added.

Sam (with a sly wink).—"Why, this gentleman thinks he has a horse in the stable that can lick your mare at a trot."

Traveller (with a wink at Sam).—"Oh, what's the use of talking about that nonsense? you know very well my mare can *not* trot fast, Sam."

Sam.—"Well, no; but still I don't like to sit here and hear people bounce about their fast-trotting horses."

Coper (with well-assumed warmth).—"Who *is* bouncing?"

Sam.—"Why, you; and if you think anything about your grand trotter, back him for a 'fiver' against the mare; that's what I say."

Coper.—"Indeed, I have no 'fivers' to bet about trotting-horses."

Sam.—"Well, then, shut up."

Coper.—"When I please."

Traveller.—"Drop it, Sam—drop it. Come, sir, have a glass of sherry with me," said he to the coper, in a conciliatory tone.

Healths were pledged, and there was a temporary lull in the somewhat angry controversy; but another bottle being subscribed for by the company, and glass after glass finding its way to the eight twopennyworths of villanous whiskey on the butcher's stomach, it soon became a case of wrangling drunk—a character which none can act so well as the half-butcher, half-horse-dealing, trotting *genus homo,* so often to be met with in our horse-proud country.

The coper bided his time; he knew very well the butcher would again bring up the trotting controversy; he had also noticed the traveller's wink, and knowing his weakness, he was tolerably sure of a match. He walked out of the bar, ostensibly for the purpose of ordering his horse.

"Who is that man?" said the confederate to the traveller and Sam.

"I don't know," said Sam, "he is all bounce, and holds no sugar."

"What do you mean by sugar?" said the confederate.

"Tin, rhino, money, to be sure," said Sam.

"Oh, there you are mistaken, for I noticed, when he paid for his brandy, that he had a bag of sovereigns," said the confederate.

"Had he?" said Sam, brightening up, and turning to the traveller, "let's try him whether he will back his 'bag of bones,' as he calls him, against the mare," said he.

Traveller.—"Very well."

(Enter Coper.) "Well, will you have a spin for a 'fiver?'" said Sam.

Coper.—"Didn't I tell you before that I had no 'fivers' to spare?"

Sam.—"Ah, I knew you were all bounce. Your horse can't trot at all; indeed, you were never able to buy a trotting horse."

Coper.—"You are very insulting, and to prove to you that you are mistaken, I will match my horse for a 'fiver,' as you call it, against this gentleman's mare —a mile in harness."

Sam.—"Agreed; here's my money; cover it, and you're on."

The coper pulled out lots of money, from which he counted five sovereigns, and staked the whole in the hands of the landlord.

The nags were harnessed, a crowd of people collected, and the match came off, the owners driving from one mile post to another, as agreed, outside the village; the coper kept Dusty Bob well in hand, and he lost the race, but not before he had ascertained that he could have gone by the mare at any time. The party adjourned to the inn; and, as may be imagined, were in high glee. The drinking and bragging were kept up till a late hour. The coper feigned drunk. The traveller was really drunk; so was the butcher. They wrangled and chaffed the coper in turns; until finally they agreed to trot the mare against his horse for a hundred pounds a-side. The traveller posted the money on the table and the coper covered it, and a sporting miller, resident in the village, who dropped in casually, was deputed to hold the stakes. It was agreed that the race should come off over the same ground on the following day.

The traveller and butcher were in high glee; indeed, the latter booked the race as his own, and particularly requested the insertion of a proviso in the agreement, "that either party failing to be at the post at twelve o'clock the day following, should forfeit the money down." This was signed by both parties, and shortly after the company broke up, the coper staying at the inn all night, and the confederate, who had well played his part of "keeping the game alive," slept at another inn.

Long before twelve o'clock the day following, might be seen all the horse talent in the neighbourhood assemble at the place of meeting for the great trot. The butcher was most anxious to drive the mare; but the owner preferred the honour of driving her himself. She was a high-bred, hot-tempered animal, very unlikely to trot a mile through a crowd in company, without breaking. The coper knew this very well. He also knew by the nervous, anxious twitching of the traveller's face, that the night's drinking had done its work: and that, although he had assumed drunkenness himself, he went to bed perfectly sober. The sporting miller acted as judge, and the parties started their respective nags (harnessed to gigs) at the tap of a drum, and away they went—the mare breaking directly after the start; but catching her stride again, she led at a switching pace. The butcher shouted, and tossed his hat.

"Let her go," said he, as he galloped along in the rear, on a spavined hack, continuously fiddling with his left persuader on the poor devil's side.

The traveller did let her go, but still he could not shake off the coper; he gave her the whip, and she broke badly; and now the coper passed her. But the fine handling of the traveller again brought her down to business, and again she had her nose in front: the half-mile was now covered.

"Let her go, let her go!" again shouted the butcher; but the coper thought it was now time to let Dusty Bob go, and away he went, winning by more than 200 yards; and waiting for the traveller coming up, he accosted him quietly with—

"I think your mare does not go quite so fast to-day as she did yesterday, or my old horse has wonderfully improved. What do you think?"

Traveller.—"Oh, you be hanged!"

Butcher. — "Yes, you be hanged, you swindling thief!"

Coper (to sporting miller).—"Give me the stakes."

The stakes were handed up, for they had been fairly won, and there could be no protest.

"There," said the coper (returning £5 to the miller), "give the butcher a bucket of gruel and a bran mash, for which you can pay out of this, and keep the rest for yourself. And now I'm off. Good bye," said he, as he eased his hands, and Dusty Bob dashed away.

"A clean sell that, by jingo," said the brewer's traveller.

CHAPTER VII.

CAPTAIN B——. — THE ADVERTISEMENT. — THE DOCTOR'S HORSE. — A BOG SPAVIN. — THE HORSE RETURNED. — AN HONEST DEALER. — A COPER FRIGHTENED. — A HANDSOME PAIR OF CARRIAGE HORSES. — ANOTHER SWINDLE.— OTHER MODES OF TRICKERY.— THE SALT TRICK. — THE WELSH FARMER. — A NERVED HORSE. — THE ROARER. — THE MAYOR OF CHESTER. — HIS LORDSHIP'S BAILIFF.— A CLEVER TAKE-IN.—THE BITER BIT.—CHANGE OUT OF SEVENTY POUNDS.

A Captain B——, of Brighton, called at the establishment of a respectable horse-dealer in the west end of London, and, after inspecting several horses in his stud, selected one as being the most likely to suit him, but left the completion of the purchase until the following day, when, he said, he would come to London and call again, or write to the dealer.

On his way to the railway station, he called at an hotel, and read in a morning paper an advertisment of a brougham horse to be sold, and described as the property of a medical gentleman, who could be referred to, and, the address being in the same direction he was going, after leaving the hotel, he took the opportunity of dropping in to see it, thinking it was just possible to pick up a bargain.

"You have a brougham horse here for sale?" said he to the groom (who was a well-known horse-coper in the garb of a groom).

"Yessir," said Jimmey, the groom.

Captain B——.—"Let me see him out."

Jimmey.—"Certainly, sir."

The horse was brought out, and Jimmey expatiated on his merits. The Captain was no judge, and although many of the horse's infirmities were hidden by his condition, yet any person who possessed the slightest particle of knowledge about horses might have seen that he was a thorough screw.

"Who does he belong to?" inquired the Captain.

"Doctor L——, of St. John's Wood."

Just at this moment, another character appeared on the scene; he was a respectable-looking, aged person, wearing a black, clerical-cut coat, a broad-brimmed hat, a respirator covering his mouth, and a gold-headed cane in his hand. He walked slowly up the yard, stopping now and then to cough, and entered the stable, without the least noticing the Captain. He inquired of the groom, in a low, husky voice, and feigning illness, whether his daughter had been there?

"Oh, dear, yes, sir, she has—and she is in a pretty way about you, sir, being out in these cold, easterly winds. She left word that she was going to Swan and Edgar's, in Regent Circus, to make some purchases, and that if you called here, she desired me to say you were to go up there immediately."

"Yes, yes; I'll go," said he, as he hobbled off, being seized with another fit of coughing in the middle of the yard.

"Is that the gentleman who owns the horse?" said the Captain to Jimmey.

"Yes," said Jimmey; "that is Dr. ——."

The Captain waited until the coughing scene was finished, and then, walking up to him, said—

"Pardon me, sir, but you are Dr. ——, of —— Road, St. John's Wood."

"Yes, I am, sir," said the Doctor, with an effort.

"You have a horse here for sale; what do you want for him?" said the Captain.

"My dear sir," began the Doctor, "I am sorry that I am not able to talk to you as I could wish; for, as you see, I am very poorly (gasps for breath and lays his hand on his side). I am going to Germany to recruit my health, and have left the sale of him all to my groom, who is an old and trustworthy servant. He has been with me eighteen years, and he will tell you all about the horse; but I may say, that I bought him from the breeder, he is six years old, and, for anything I know to the contrary, is perfectly sound. I instructed James to sell him for 80 guineas; he cost me 130 guineas. But I am anxious to sell him, for I am going away in a few days. Excuse me staying longer with you. Good morning, sir!"

"Good morning!" said the Captain, with a very low bow.

The upshot of this scene was the purchase of the horse from Jimmey, and, returning to the hotel, he wrote a letter to the dealer, of which the following is a correct copy from the original, which is now before me:—

"Webb's Hotel, March 17, 1859.

"Sir—I much regret that I shall not be able to take your horse, having, after I left you, met with a medical friend, from whom I purchased one which, I think, will be more suitable for my purpose.

"I am, &c.,
"J—— B——."

Jimmey received the cheque for £84, which he got cashed, and, in accordance with the Captain's instructions, led the horse to the railway station, and sent him in a box to Brighton. When the horse was put into his new master's brougham, he commenced to kick, and soon proved himself a coachmaker's friend, by staving in the front part of the vehicle with his hind feet, and cut his own hocks very badly into the bargain. The veterinary surgeon was sent for to dress the wounds, in doing which he discovered a "bog spavin." This led to a further examination, when it was found that the horse was suffering from chronic lameness in both fore feet, besides other infirmities too numerous to mention: suffice it to say, that his value was not more than £5 or £6.

The Captain immediately went to London, leaving instructions for the groom to bring the horse by rail. He took a cab to the Doctor's stables, but nothing was known of any Doctor, and Jimmey, the groom, only had a screw standing there at livery a few days, and he had never been seen since the horse went away; that was all they knew about the man. Here was a predicament for the Captain to be in, and the horse on his way to the town! What was to be done with him when he arrived; for it was evident that he had been done very brown? At last he determined to take the horse to the very dealer to whom he at first applied for a horse. He would confess everything, and ask his advice, and, if possible, get him to take the screw as part payment for the horse he at first selected, or some other, if that was sold. He accordingly met his groom and gave the necessary instructions, and followed himself, but when he arrived found the principal away at Lincoln Fair; so he left the horse at livery, telling the foreman he would come again on a certain day. When the dealer arrived home with his horses, he found the Captain's screw very comfortably quartered in one of his best boxes.

"Halloo, halloo, Jerry!" said he. "What the devil have you got here?"

"It's a horse that Captain B——, of Brighton, left here, sir. He's been cheated by a gang of copers, and wants your advice," said Jerry.

"Indeed," said the dealer, "Captain B—— ought to have taken my advice at first, and bought the horse I offered him."

"He said he would do so now, if you would take the screw off his hands," said Jerry.

"Oh, oh! *me* take the screw off his hands! I'll not have such a heap of infirmity on my premises," said the dealer, and immediately wrote the following note to Captain B——:

"Sir,—I am surprised that you should attempt to disgrace my establishment, with leaving such a wretch of a horse at livery there during my absence. I desire that you immediately send for him, or I must send him to you, by rail or road, charging you with the expenses, as I wish you to understand that mine is not a knacker's yard at present

"Yours, &c., &c."

Immediately on receipt of this letter, the Captain came to London, and apologised in the most handsome manner to the dealer, which, of course, he accepted, but refused to treat for the screw. However, the Captain bought a sound horse; and then came the question, What was to be done with the other poor devil? The native intelligence of the dealer had been quickened by the deal, and he offered to take him off the Captain's hands, at knacker's price, to save him the trouble of sending him there. These terms the Captain accepted, and, as far as he was concerned, there was an end of the transaction.

The dealer knew the whereabouts of the coping gang who had swindled the Captain—particularly the one who figured as the "Doctor,"—and he determined to punish him in his own way, and make a profit by him at the same time. Those of my readers who are London horse-dealers will know whom I allude to as the Doctor, and they will be pleased to know that, in this instance, he was pretty well dosed with his own physic. The dealer suggested to the Captain that he should sit down and write a letter to his dictation, and post it to him (the dealer) from Brighton. The following is a copy:—

"—— Terrace, Brighton, May 2, 1859.

"Dear Sir—I bought a horse from a man who represented himself to be a physician, at St. John's Wood, and find that I have been grossly swindled, as no such person is known in that locality. The horse is unsound and worthless. I have sent him for your inspection, and if you will take this matter up for me, find out the scoundrels and give them in charge of the police, I will come to London and prosecute them to the utmost rigour of the law. For any trouble or expense you may incur I will amply repay you, as I am determined to make an example of them. I send you a description of the scoundrel who calls himself a doctor in a separate form—viz., a handbill, a thousand of which are printed and ready for distribution; but I await your advice. Please write me by return.

"I am, sir, yours faithfully

"J—— B——."

This letter was posted at Brighton, and received by the dealer, and he wrote to the Doctor (*alias* Coper) the following:—

> "Sir—If you value your liberty, meet me at the —— Hotel Don't come near my establishment, or you may meet the enraged Captain, to whom you sold a screw for eighty guineas last week, who may give you into custody before you have a chance to settle it.
>
> "Yours, &c.,
> "——."

The dealer sent the horse first, and then followed himself to the meeting place, and in a short time was confronted with the Doctor, who now appeared to be quite recovered from his illness, and attired like a person in the middle walk of life. He was attended by two cut-throat-looking fellows, who were evidently employed for a rescue, or any other purpose, as occasion required. But when the Doctor saw there was no immediate danger, he made a signal, and they withdrew. The dealer knew by this that he had him in his power, for he was frightened.

"Read this letter," said he, handing it to the coper. Doctor reads, and folds it up again. "This must be settled," said he.

Dealer.—"I should think you must settle it; and immediately."

Coper.—"Will you stand my friend?"

Dealer.—"On certain conditions."

Coper.—"What are they?"

Dealer.—"That you take the horse back and return every shilling of the money, pay ten pounds for expenses, and fifty pounds to compensate me for the trouble I have taken to suppress the circulation of the handbills, and thereby saving you from gaol, where you have been so often; for if you go again you are certain to be transported."

Doctor.—"I agree to the conditions, and will pay you the money and take the horse back."

The money (£144) was paid to the dealer then and there. He subsequently paid the Captain his money back and expenses (although not bound to do so), and kept the remainder for himself, so that, in this instance at least, one of the most clever horse-copers in London was out-copered.

My chapters on horse swindling are now drawing to a close, and I flatter myself that I say that the principal object which I had in view has been attained—viz., that of drawing a line between the honourable licensed dealer in horses and the low swindling coper, with which London and the country abound.

There is at all times a sufficient number of useful horses to be found in the boxes of respectable dealers, so that there is no reason that gentlemen should incur the risk of being cheated in the purchase of them. But the desire to buy cheap horses is so predominant, that the regular licensed dealer is deserted for the horse coper, which is the cause of our continually hearing of gentlemen being swindled. Purchasers seem to forget (if they ever knew) that really good horses, free from defects, well formed, perfect in their paces, and free from vice, can scarcely be too dear at any price.

I notice many horses in London, that for fashion, breeding, and quality, cannot be surpassed in any part of the world. I also notice, even in the equipages of noblemen and gentlemen of well-known wealth, many miserable weeds that would not fetch £20 each in a fair. I cannot compliment their owners for their taste; and were I a wealthy man, I would ride and drive the best horses that the country could produce; they cost no more in keeping than bad horses; besides, a really good horse is as good as ready money in the bank—he can either be sold or kept; but there is always a difficulty in finding a customer for a bad horse, and it is seldom that the seller hears the last of him, even after he has delivered him, and received the paltry price from the purchaser.

Nothing bespeaks the true-bred English gentleman so plainly as the quality of his horses; such a man invariably patronises the respectable dealer. The penny-wise and pound-foolish gentleman will patronise the chaunting coper, and always pay as much in the long run for unsound horses as he would have done for honest animals at the establishments of respectable men.

I know a gentleman who, in July last, came to London for the purpose of buying a pair of carriage-horses; he applied to a dealer of high standing in the West End, who recommended a pair of young, fresh, and exceedingly handsome horses, for which he asked the sum of one hundred and sixty guineas. The gentleman brought ten or a dozen friends, and a veterinary surgeon, to aid his judgment, and the horses were all but purchased, when one morning he picked up the *Times* and read the following advertisement:—

> "To be sold, in consequence of a demise, a pair of carriage horses. They are six years old each, and perfectly sound; recently cost 200 guineas; but, to effect a speedy sale, the sum of 120 guineas will be taken, and a warranty of soundness and freedom from vice will be given.—Apply to Mrs. Hardacre, ——— Hall, Cumberland, or the business can be transacted through her coachman, who will be in London on the 12th inst. (this was the 11th), and the horses can be seen on that day, at ——— Mews, ——— Square."

"The very thing for me; how fortunate I did not buy the pair for which I am in treaty, for, most likely, these are quite as good, if not better," said the gentleman to himself, as he entered the address in his pocket-book, sallied out of the Queen's Hotel, in Cork Street, and hailed a Hansom cab. Twenty minutes brought him to the door of the stable where the flat-catching beauties stood waiting his or some other victim's coming. A stable boy was in charge, who at once volunteered to run for the coachman, who speedily came. He was attired in a spanking new suit of mourning livery.

"You are Mrs. Hardacre's coachman, I presume," said the gentleman to the coper in livery.

Coper (pulling off his hat and smoothing his hair over his forehead with the left hand).—"Yes, sir."

Gent.—"These are the pair of horses she advertised for sale, I suppose."

Coper.—"Yes, sir."

Gent.—"I suppose you have been driving them."

Coper.—"Yes, sir; I have driven them for my poor master for the last two years; but Missus is only going to keep a pony and phaeton in future, and so she has the carriage horses for sale."

Gent.—"Are they quiet and sound?"

Coper.—"Oh dear, yes; my poor master was an excellent judge of horses; he bought them at four years old from the breeder. I trained them myself, and they have never been in any other hands but ours."

Gent.—"Do you think 120 guineas would be the lowest?"

Coper.—"Yes, sir; I'm sure it would; in fact, I expect a gentleman here every minute. I think he's a horse-dealer; he saw the horses yesterday at the railway station, and promised to call here this morning and look at them again."

Gent. (considers).—"Well, I'll take them at the price, if you will allow me a week's trial."

Coper.—"If you will wait until the other gentleman has called, and if he does not buy them, I shall have no objection to let you have them a few days, if you will deposit the price of them; for you see, sir, I'm a stranger in London, and I want to be on the safe side."

Gent.—"Well, I'll take your word, and pay you for them, if you will give me a warranty."

Coper.—"I have the warranty ready written. My Missus got her lawyer to draw it up. Here it is, sir. It only wants filling up with your name, sir."

The gentleman took the warranty and the coper to his hotel, and paid him £126 for a pair of the most miserable screws that ever were collared. One had a pair of bog spavins, and was a wheezer; the other was a curby-hocked roarer of at least seventeen summers. This was, of course, soon discovered by the gentleman's groom. He wrote to Mrs. Hardacre, the widow lady, but his letter came back, marked "returned paid letter." The horses were sold for £27, and are now in the hands of a notorious gang of chaunting copers in the west end of London, and are constantly being sold to gentlemen who are on the look-out for cheap horses, and rebought by the agents of these copers. But, again, let me remind horse-buyers that if they want fashion, substance, and quality combined, they must be prepared to pay the breeder a fair price for the judgment and risk always consequent upon raising the best kind of horse stock, and which always find a ready market with the London dealers of position.

The true horse coper will seldom stoop to any other species of roguery but that of cheating the inexperienced horse buyer; but there is a class of men who regularly frequent fairs and the vicinity of horse repositories, who dress and ape the horsey style of gait so peculiar to the coper; these are neither more nor less than thieves in disguise. They would as soon knock a man down on the highway and rob him of his money as they would drug his liquor in a low public house, and then pick his pocket, or induce him to make a bet upon some paltry matter, get him to stake his money, and then run off with it, or pretend to wrap it up for him, and substitute forged notes and base sovereigns in place of his good ones; in short, their chief vocation is to get money in any way or shape whatever, with a recklessness and barefaced effrontery that would astonish the regular sneaking town thief.

One of their favourite dodges is to sell a drove of cattle or sheep, and draw the money for them during a temporary absence of the owner, and then decamp.

I remember a case of this description occurring at Shrewsbury fair, where a grazier left a boy in charge of thirteen cows, while he went to dine; the lad was treated to a show by one of the gang, while the whole drove of cattle were examined by a customer, which they had casually picked up, and sold to him as a bargain, being, as they said, the last of a large number.

When the owner returned from dinner he found the boy absent, and the dupe marking the cattle with his own private mark in a busy bustling style, that told too plainly he had paid for them.

"What the devil are you doing with those cows?" said the owner.

Dupe.—"Why, you see what I'm doing—marking 'em to be sure."

Owner.—"You'd better let 'em alone, I think, or I'll mark you."

Dupe.—"Well, that's good, however; can't a man do what he likes with his own?"

Owner.—"'His own,' did you say? Why, you crazy fool, these cows are mine."

Dupe.—"Your's, ah! where's your keeper, cranky? you must have escaped from some mad-house. Why, I've just bought the cows, and paid £207 for 'em."

Owner.—"You lie; the cattle are mine, and I have not sold 'em."

The dupe and his herdsmen attempted to drive the cows away by force. A crowd collected, the police came, and finally the cattle were impounded, until the true ownership was ascertained, and the poor dupe made fully aware of the great mistake he had made. The delinquents got clear away with the £207, and the dupe employed detectives, and wasted a deal more good money, in the hope of bringing them to justice, but without success.

This class of thieves includes thimble-riggers, card-sharpers, conjurors, &c.; but they never meddle with horses; the cast of their countenances is eternally stamped with the prison die, and they cannot stand the keen searching glance of men whose avocation is among horses. For of all men, I believe thorough-bred English horsemen, be they dealers, breeders, or hunting gentlemen, are good judges of human character, and a rogue cannot stare them in the face without feeling uncomfortable. There is a bold and searching expression in the eye of a good horseman, and an easy confidence in his gait, that seems to tell you that he fears no man, and can face most women.

Look at our genuine hunting men; they are Nature's gentlemen; by which I mean those who can and do ride up to hounds, distinct from the made-up specimens of sportsmen occasionally visible at the cover side, but who are never to be seen elsewhere, and who dare not compete in a trial of pluck and skill with the real hunting man across country; the wealth of a Nabob would not tempt them.

If all those young gentlemen who have the means, would breathe more country air, and indulge more frequently in field sports, instead of wasting their valuable health in the enervating dissipation of a London life, they would secure to themselves a much larger amount of enjoyment than that which they now partake of, and of a rational and satisfactory description; and their pallid countenances and languid looks would give place to the ruddy glow of health, accompanied by the bright eye, the smart elastic step, the happy beaming countenance, and manly resolution of England's most noble children —viz., her hunting, shooting, fishing, coursing, rowing, cricketing, rifle volunteering representatives. But I am unconsciously wandering from my subject, the exposition of the practices of that class of the community who live upon the credulity and industry of others.

Another trick, becoming very much in vogue with these characters, is called the "salt trick." The *modus operandi* is as follows;—Two confederates appear as strangers to each other, and enter some business-doing public house, where the company are of a class that is likely to tolerate a betting transaction; one professes to be suffering most acutely from tooth ache, and commences to rub his jaw with something screwed up in a bit of paper; the confederate asks him what the paper contains, and he tells him "salt."

"Why," says the confederate, "whoever told you that salt would do you good?"

"Why, a dentist to be sure," says the other.

"And does it really do you good?" asks the confederate.

"Certainly, or do you think I should be such a fool as to use it?" replies the other.

At this moment the one with the toothache places the screwed paper containing the salt on the table, and retires. The confederate immediately suggests that it would be a good lark to change the contents of the paper and substitute ashes or sawdust. Some of the company invariably enter into the lark, by changing the contents of the paper, and replacing it exactly where the supposed dupe left it, who, on entering, immediately commences using it again. The confederate recommences chaffing him about his old-womanish method of curing the toothache, until the other tells him to mind his own business, and not to annoy him. "For," says he, "what have you to do with it?"

But the chaffing is kept up until the man with the toothache offers to bet a certain amount of money that the contents of the paper are salt, and nothing else. The confederate, however, contrives to shuffle this part of the business on to the shoulders of some one else. There is, however, generally one or more in a bar parlour company who are always ready to bet a few pounds about anything, especially when they think they see so clear a chance of winning, as in this case.

The money is staked, and the paper is opened, when lo, the contents are really salt, and nothing else—the man having watched his opportunity, and changed the screwed-up paper left on the table, and prepared by the confederates, for another exactly of the same size, containing salt, previously prepared, and safely deposited in his pocket. This is a case of "diamond cut diamond," and the company invariably turn the laugh against the man who has lost his money.

This class of rogues is too often confounded with horse copers, which is a mistake, for although the horse coper will invariably cheat a man in the purchase or sale of horses, and have recourse to the most unworthy means to attain his end, he has too much spirit and too much pride, however misplaced it may be, to descend to these very mean and paltry practices of extracting money from the pockets of the unsuspecting. He is an unmitigated rogue, but in his own way; he flies at high game, and goes in for large amounts, and scorns to descend to the petty devices of the salt trick.

"Good morning, sir," said a well-made-up horse-coper to a Welsh farmer, who was on his way with a drove of sheep to Chester fair last spring. The coper was in a gig, and invited the farmer to get in and ride, leaving the sheep in care of a lad and the dog. He accepted the coper's offer, and rode with him to Chester, a distance of about five miles. They were very chatty together, and in course of conversation the coper told the farmer that his business at the fair was to buy two or three horses for his master, a nobleman, for whom he was farm bailiff.

"But," says he, "I am not over-fond of my job, for I have not been much accustomed to the purchasing of horses at fairs, there are so many of these rascally copers who frequent fairs, and I am afraid of being cheated. Do you know anything about horse-dealing?" said he to the farmer.

"Nothing at all; I never deal in anything but sheep, and it is seldom that I attend fairs," replied the Welshman.

They reach Chester, and drive into the yard of an inn, when the horse is stabled. They then adjourn to the bar parlour, and the Welshman pays for glasses, and soon after they separate about their respective business. The Welshman strolls about the fair until the lad arrived with the sheep. The coper keeps his eye upon all his movements, and in the meantime weaves his net, with which he intends to catch his unsuspecting victim. He first transfers the horse and gig which he drove to the fair, to a confederate. The gang then consult, and the least suspicious-looking man in the lot is told off to assist Coper No. 1 in the intended swindle.

The best trotting horse in the lot of screws which form their joint stock, is saddled and bridled, and stationed at a certain rendezvous, for it is more than probable he will be required. A very good-looking horse is then turned over to Coper No. 2. This horse, in addition to being a roarer, has been "nerved" (a term used among horse copers for the operation called "neurotonomy"), that is, if a horse is lame in his feet (navicular disease is the most common malady to which the operation of neurotonomy is applied), he is relieved by a separation of the nerve which supplies the foot with feeling; the horse will then go sound; but this is an operation which requires a great amount of skill, and is but seldom practised by veterinary surgeons upon gentlemen's horses; for although the horse may be relieved of the agony proceeding from navicular or any other disease of the feet by this operation, he is never considered safe to ride or drive afterwards.

Copers, however, often have recourse to this operation; and, as practice makes perfect, they think no more of nerving a horse than they do of "setting him" for broken wind, or dosing a kicker with opium. The horse is cast on his side, and secured with hobbles, an incision is made in the skin of the shank, just above the fetlock, and laid back. The nerve and sinews are all exposed. The nerve is then divided, when the horse is turned over, and the like operation performed on the other side. The skin is sewn together, and the horse ceases henceforth to suffer the pain in his feet, and in a short time the incision is healed; but a mark is left, frequently disclosing itself by a line of white hairs; these are dyed to the corresponding colour of the surrounding parts, and the inexperienced eye cannot detect any mark of lameness, for the horse is to all appearance sound.

The horse selected for the purpose of swindling the Welsh farmer, as I have already told my readers, was a roarer, and had undergone the operation of neurotonomy. He had been long bought from a gentleman, whose veterinary surgeon had returned him as incurable of the navicular disease, and in place of shooting him or nerving him, and turning him out as a pensioner, he was sold for a mere trifle to a gang of copers, who now kept him for no other purpose than that of swindling the inexperienced. This horse was about sixteen years old, but his mouth had been so skilfully "bishoped," and the indentations over his eyes so well puffed up, that the unsuspecting observer would suppose him to be only six years old; he was a rich brown colour, about sixteen hands high, in fine condition, and very handsome.

Coper No. 2 was dressed like a well-to-do farmer, and took charge of this screw, whose value was certainly not more than ten pounds. The lynx-eyed Coper No. 1 watched the Welshman sell his sheep, and marked him down at the inn where he went with the purchaser to receive his money. He then had a second consultation with his confederates, the result of which was, that one should accompany him to the inn, where he knew the Welshman to be; they entered the room where the intended victim sat, saw him roll up his honest-got notes, and deposit them in an inside pocket of his waistcoat.

"Well, sir, how are you by this time?" said the Coper, addressing the Welshman.

"Oh, all right," he replied.

"Sold the sheep?"

"Yes."

"Well, I have done my business too, and when I have paid this gentleman for two horses, I am ready for home; perhaps you will ride back with me as far as I go?"

"Thank you, I will," said the Welshman.

The copers sit down, and Coper No. 1 takes out his pocket-book and pays his confederate £110, all in forged notes, the other throws a genuine sovereign on the table for luck.

"There," said Coper 1, exhibiting two genuine five-pound notes, "these and this sovereign are all the money I have left; I am afraid his lordship will grumble at me, for he said I had quite sufficient money to buy a carriage horse as well as two cart horses."

"Oh, he will never grumble at the price you have given me for the cart horses; they are well worth more money; but do you really want a carriage horse?" said the confederate.

"Yes, we do."

"What colour? Is your governor particular?" inquired the coper.

"Well, yes, he would prefer a brown gelding, about sixteen hands high, as he wants to match another," said Coper No. 1.

"How fortunate—why, a friend of mine has the very horse for you, one he has bred himself, and has been working him easily on the farm since a four-year old; he is in the fair with him, and he was unsold an hour ago, for there are no London dealers here to-day, and nobody else will buy such a horse; but let us go and see him if he is not sold. Have a walk, sir," said Coper No. 1 to the Welshman, "and then we shall lose no time, for I want to be off."

"Yes, I'll go with you," he replied; and the three go in search of the friend and his horse.

"Oh, here he is; I see he is about selling him to that dealer, I'll warrant."

"No, he isn't a dealer. Why, it's the Mayor of Chester."

"By Jove, he's a nice horse," says Coper No. 1, "and just the very animal for his lordship."

"He is a nice horse," says the Welshman.

"Now, your worship," says the apparent owner and breeder, "it is not like buying a horse from a stranger; you can take the horse and work him a month, and I'll give you a warranty, and if he does not suit you can send him back and have your money returned."

At this moment a man, dressed in livery, hurriedly approached "The Mayor," respectfully touched his hat, and said—"Please, sir, you are wanted immediately, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn has arrived."

"I'll see you again," said "The Mayor," as he hurried off the stage with the flunkey.

(There is always a flunkey in a well-organised gang of first-class copers.)

"How much do you ask for that horse, Mr. Owen?" said the man who had acted his part as receiver for the cart horses.

"Seventy guineas," said Coper No. 2, "and he is richly worth one hundred; but as you know I require the money, and there are no buyers of this class of horses here to-day, or I should have sold him for that sum, I have no doubt, I'll take that sum."

The horse has now to play his part, and well he performs it; the lad who holds him is instructed to "Run him on a bit," and away he goes in grand style, exhibiting his really grand action in a graceful trot; but the lad knows better than to trot him back, and he walks him proudly up and fixes his forehand on rising ground—if he had been trotted briskly back, the roaring would have been detected.

"But there he is," said the assumed breeder, "as sound in wind and limb as any horse in the world; I'll give a warranty with him, and sell him for seventy guineas."

Coper No. 1 now taps the Welshman on the shoulder.

"A word with you," said he, as they retired a few paces. "Now," said he, "this is just the very horse for his lordship, but eleven pounds is all the money I have left, and if I do not buy him it is probable The Mayor will. You and I are going the same way, and if you will lend me £62 10s. to make up the seventy guineas, I will give you a sovereign; of course you can keep the horse until I get you the money from his lordship," said the coper. "Or if you like it better, I will give you this eleven pounds, and you can buy the horse and pay me ten pounds back when his lordship pays you; and when I explain the matter to him, I have not the least doubt that he will give you a five-pound note for the loan of your money."

"Very well, I'll buy the horse for you, I have quite plenty to pay for him without your £11; perhaps we may get him for £70, and then we can divide the shillings between us, his lordship will never dream of anything but guineas," said the Welshman, who was not a bit more honest than he should be.

"Agreed," said the assumed bailiff, and the Welshman forthwith buys the screw for 70 guineas, receiving back the 70 shillings for luck; he sends his lad to lead the horse the same way he had travelled with the sheep that morning, the assumed breeder wishes him good-bye and great luck with the horse. The bailiff says he will go and order the gig; they will overtake the lad, who can ride with them, and the horse will run behind. And he is off; but not for the gig, for in less than five minutes he is on the back of the trotter before alluded to, and dressed in a smock-frock and wide-awake hat, he is rapidly covering the ground in a contrary direction, and the same night at ten o'clock he meets his confederates (who have travelled in the gig) not a hundred miles from Chapel Street, Salford. One of the gang, however (who has never been seen by the Welshman), is left behind to play his part. This fellow sends a lad to the inn where the Welshman is waiting for the bailiff.

"Is there a gentleman here waiting for Lord A——'s steward?" says he.

"Yes," says the Welshman.

"Please, sir, he told me to tell you to walk after him; he is waiting for you at the toll-gate."

Away goes the Welshman; but the bailiff is not at the toll-gate.

"Have you seen a gentleman go through here with a low-crowned hat, and wearing a green coat with metal buttons?"

"No," said the toll-collector.

"Well, he'll be up directly; will you tell him that the sheep-dealer has walked forward?"

"Yes," said the man. The poor victim walked on, and kept turning his head at every rattle of wheels, but the bailiff came not. He overtook the lad leading the miserable screw.

"It is strange," said he, "what the gentleman can be doing."

They walked on a little way further, and then stood still to wait for the bailiff. The victim eyed the horse from head to heel, but, like the Irishman once said, the more he saw him the worse he liked him. While he was looking at him, the coper who had been left behind came walking up, in a contrary direction (having, by a cross cut, come into the main road some distance ahead of the Welshman).

"Is that horse for sale?" said he. The Welshman, whose heart was fast failing him, thought there would be no harm in selling him, especially if he could make a profit.

"Yes," said he.

"How much?" said the coper.

"A hundred pounds," said the Welshman.

"Of what?" enquired the coper. "I suppose you mean soap, at 6d. per lb., for that would be £2 10s., and more than he's worth."

Welshman.—"More than he's worth! What do you mean? Why, I have given more than seventy sovereigns for him."

Coper.—"Then you've been jockied. Why, the horse is a roarer, I am sure. I can tell by the unnatural width of his nose; look how wide the air passages are from his nostrils upwards; and, well I declare, I'll bet any amount of money that he's been been nerved, too, for 'vickeler disease.'"

Welshman.—"What do you mean by being nerved for 'vickeler' disease?"

Coper.—"Why, you take him back to Chester and show him to a veterinary surgeon, and then he'll tell you all about it; however, I'll convince you that he is a roarer." The coper here jumped on to the horse's back (where he had often been before) and trotted him smartly out for two or three hundred yards, and galloped him back a confirmed roarer—there could be no mistake, he roared like a mad bull.

"Oh dear, oh dear," said the Welshman, "whatever must I do with him?"

Coper.—"Well, bring him to a veterinary surgeon, and let him examine whether he has not been nerved, and then I will buy him of you."

The screw is brought back to a veterinary surgeon at Chester, and examined by him, and the tale of his infirmities being confirmed, he is finally repurchased by the coper for £6, and is thus once more reinstated in the hands of the Philistines, to be again used as an instrument for making victims.

HORSE TALK.

CHAPTER I.

HORSE BREEDING—HUNTERS AND THEIR RIDERS.

THE majority of our hunting men of the present day will ride (with saddle and bridle) not less than fourteen stone; they are mostly strong, athletic, skilful horsemen, who must and will be carried wherever the hounds go. Need we wonder, then, that they have considerable trouble in finding, and have to pay enormous prices for horses that can go on galloping freely, and jumping with such a burden on their backs, field after field, through a strongly enclosed country.

We pay as much or more attention to condition than ever we did. Our hounds are now bred with more speed than formerly. Foxes are frequently rattled into and worried in less than twenty minutes. Our hunters have plenty of speed and blood, but many of them lack that very essential quality in horses, "substance." My tyro will know that the faster the pace in the hunting field the greater will be the danger of accidents, when riding a horse under great weight. But if he must keep pace with the field, he must select a horse with some blood in his veins; I may almost say that racing blood of the purest kind is essential in these days, when fast runs are all the fashion. But where is the class of horse now bred which combines racing speed with substance sufficient to carry a fourteen or fifteen stone man, with perfect safety, over a rasping country?

The refuse of the racing studs are certainly not the class of animals adapted for a service of this kind; they have been bred solely for their one single quality of speed, they were never intended to carry a *man*—only *baby jockies.* The useful farmer's nag bred in some countries is strong encught to carry an elephant at his own pace, but that pace is not half fast enough for our modern breed of foxhounds and style of riding up to them. We want pure blood combined with great substance to carry men of average weight with safety and credit. There are many such horses bred, and are to be procured, but the demand for them far exceeds the supply, and it is no uncommon thing for gentlemen to give from two to three hundred guineas for such an animal. Is it not, then, desirable for farmers to turn their attention to the production of such animals? Ours is the best horse-breeding country in the world. We have, I am sure, both sires and dams sufficient, with every requisite quality, to form the nucleus of many more breeding studs.

If men can be found with judgment to select them, and capital to pay for them, and sufficient energy to enter into the business with a will and determination to carry it out liberally, I doubt not that a princely fortune would be the result. We haye many intelligent and scientific farmers, men who make but few mistakes in breeding cattle and sheep; why do not they pay more attention to the breeding of horses, which would sell as readily, and at more remunerative prices than any other kind of stock?

It is as easy to produce a valuable horse as a weedy screw, by paying proper attention to the breed and quality of the progenitors. But many of our farmers breed from worn-out mares, and any travelling stallion that happens to pass by the farm, irrespective of all combinations of make, shape, or quality; in many instances both sire and dam may be weak in the loins, touched in the wind, unsound in the hocks, or otherwise afflicted with diseases common to most aged horses; and the produce, as may be expected, turns out a weak, weedy, undersized foal, with long bad-shaped legs and feet, like its sire, coarse in its head and general appearance like its dam, without the speed of the former or the strength of the latter, but almost sure to be afflicted with more or less of the bad qualities of both.

This most prevalent error is the cause of farmers paying more attention to the breeding and fattening of cattle, sheep, or pigs, than to the breeding of valuable horses; because after keeping their colts to the age of two, three, or four years, about twenty pounds are considered a fair value for the mongrel-bred brutes.

Of all the mistakes and errors committed by small breeding farmers, there is none so prevalent or so fatal as to put a worn-out, half-bred mare to a second-rate stilty racing stallion, with nothing to recommend him but the empty and worthless consideration of pedigree.

I have seen fine promising-looking colts thrown by old thorough-bred mares when nearly twenty years old; but this is only in the large breeding establishments, where, with rest and great care, the mare has been stronger at twenty years old than at five: this is a far different animal than one who has been worked till she can work no longer—until she is full of diseases and deformities—and then made use of for the reproduction of her species. Like begets its like, and we need not wonder when the breeders who pursue this line of policy, are disappointed when the produce is sent to market, and that they give up the idea of horse-breeding in disgust.

Hunters should be bred from mares in the prime of life, while their functions are at their utmost vigour. They should be selected for their power, speed, endurance, and courage, perfectly free from defects, diseases, or deformity; and should be put to short-legged stallions, with deep ribs, powerful quarters, strong loins and shoulders, with sound well-formed feet, and smart intelligent-looking heads, well set on. If both the sire and dam be thorough-bred, so much the better; but thorough-bred horses with *substance* are becoming scarcer every year; indeed, how can they be otherwise, when foals and yearlings are forced like a hot-house gardener forces his grapes and pine-apples? His owner may get the size and outward semblance, but none of the substance or quality of the fruit when grown in a natural state, and allowed its own time to ripen.

There was a time when children were worked (in the cotton factories of Manchester and its districts) until it was a rarity to see one grown to maturity in the same form that God made him; the result was the notorious transmission of their infirmities to their progeny. Then it was that the legislature interfered, and effectually prevented factory owners from working children until they were qualified to stand the fatigue without the risk of deformity. I am no advocate for government interference with private enterprise, but I think the time will come when it will be forced, in self-defence, to interfere more seriously in the matter of horse breeding than it has hitherto done. We have too much of the present quality of racing blood running through the veins of our troopers, which renders them constitutionally weak, and unfit to stand the rigour of a winter at the picket post, especially when existing upon the uncertain supply of forage, which is incidental to all armies on a campaign in a strange and perhaps hostile country.

The infusion of the racing blood of the present day into the veins of troop-horses also makes them too light for the purpose they are required; a light dragoon will, with his kit, ride an average weight of eighteen stone. It is clear then that he requires a horse with substance, but it is also essential that troopers should be well-bred, and this class of horse, commonly called the seven-eighths bred one, cannot be produced at the price given by government; indeed they cannot be produced at all, except through the medium of worn-out racing stallions, and mongrel-bred mares. But if government could procure a number of brood mares and stallions of the class above recommended, to form the nucleus of a breeding establishment, and by these means produce a number of horses and mares with good blood and substance, keeping them solely for breeding purposes, they might then, without difficulty, produce, by the aid of a cross with a lower, but stronger breed of horses, the finest cavalry horses that ever looked through a bridle.

I cannot but think that a national stake of very heavy amount, say four or five thousand pounds, would have a most beneficial effect; no horses to start under five years old, to carry twelve or thirteen stone a distance of four miles. We all know that notwithstanding the unnatural treatment to which the race-horse is now subjected, that he sometimes attains very fine proportions at six or seven years old. When sent to the stud he thickens, lets down his belly, and, as far as regards looks, is quite a different animal to what he appeared during his racing career; and we may have some idea what a magnificent sight would be afforded by a field of such animals, if they were kept and prepared from their very foalhood for this one great event.

What is to prevent such a race being established? I am convinced that it only wants starting in the most influential quarters, and the object would be gained; it would give a great impetus to horse-breeding, by drawing the attention of capitalists to the subject, and awakening the understanding of those who up to this period breed nothing but weedy mongrels not worth the litter they lie upon. The money would soon be subscribed by masters of hounds, members of hunts, and the plucky horse-proud gentlemen of our own tight little island, and the sister country, from whence I opine many of the candidates would come.

This great event might be run off at Ascot—say in six years from the 1st of January, 1861; it should be open to all nations, and no allowance as to height, weight, or breed should be made, but no horse should be alllowed to start that has ever run in a race previously.

There would be one advantage in the breeding of horses for this event, that, if bred with judgment, the losers (of which there would be a great number) would find a ready market for at them remunerative prices, as animals bred with pretensions to win such an event would be worth their cost price and a profit, for stud or general purposes—while the refuse of our present breed of racing stock is good for no purpose but to perpetuate their infirmities and constitutional weakness to our mixed breed of horses. Horses bred and reared for such an event as the one recommended, are the class we most require for hunters and chargers—for which I repeat the demand is far greater than the supply.

In this enterprising country, where capital, soil, climate, and everything tends to encourage horse-breeders, this should not be. People hunt for pleasure; and there can be no pleasure in a fifteen or sixteen stone man riding a weedy animal, only qualified to carry twelve—which we often see in the hunting field. We have horses sufficient to carry slim undergraduates, or dashing cornets; these can be bought in plenty, and at a moderate price; but hunting men of middle age require a dash of pure blood and great substance in their horses before they can "hunt for pleasure." Let us yet hope to see the supply of such horses equal to the demand; but I need not say that this state of things can only be attained by the attention of farmers and breeders being more directed to the first and most essential principles of generation and reproduction, and their conviction that the production of good horses will pay them much better in a pecuniary sense than a mongrel-bred screw.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCARCITY OF GOOD HORSES—ITS CAUSES AND PROPOSED REMEDY.

WHY is the breeding of horses on the increase in Ireland, and decreasing in England? Because, when the Irish breeder has sold his horses and pocketed his money, there is an end of the transaction. He will not give a warranty. Why should he? The purchaser has eyes to see the horse as well as himself; an' faith if he is deficient in judgment, why does he not bring some of his friends to advise him? an' sure if they think the horse is unsound, they have a more agreeable remedy than an action at law for breach of warranty—viz., "Lave him alone."

But, after all the risk and expense of bringing the English-bred horse to market, the breeder never knows when he is sold; in fact, he only lends him on trial a few weeks to a dealer, and so, by the present system of warranty, the dealer lends him to his customer; and after being in the care of some ignorant or careless servants a few weeks, he is sent back with his coat and back stuck up like a hedge-hog, and declared by the customer's veterinary surgeon to be unsound; and although another veterinary surgeon gives a certificate to the contrary, he is refused, and again thrown on the dealer's hands, who may, if he thinks proper, send him back to the breeder.

Horses are, more than human beings, continually subjected to accidents and disease, chiefly owing to the ignorance or carelessness of man, and more especially on changing owners and stables; and therefore I think it preposterous to hold the dealer responsible (for months, in some cases) for all the little ills which may arise solely in consequence of the change in the horse's treatment; for, with all deference to horse purchasers who stipulate for a warranty, I think if they are so lamentably ignorant of a horse's soundness or unsoundness, they are probably deficient in their knowledge of his stable treatment, which of itself will speedily create a cause for a veterinary surgeon to say that it amounts to a breach of warranty. There are numerous other causes for horses being returned to dealers, which I have previously explained; but I may say that the "Law of Warranty" is the principal stumbling block to the breeding of good horses.

I know many English farmers and breeders who formerly entered largely into the breeding of hunters and the better kind of saddle-horses, now prefer producing light cart-horses, for which the introduction of spring waggons in London and elsewhere is creating an extraordinary demand. These, at three and four years old, readily sell for £40 to £60, and the purchasers are not half so difficult to please as the buyers of hunters and saddle-horses. Considering the present insufficient supply of horses fit to carry our soldiers—and even the supply is steadily and surely decreasing—I think government would do well to consider some measure calculated to insure an adequate supply, and thus create a nursery for troop horses.

It has been suggested by some writers on this subject, that our government should open breeding establishments on such a scale as to make it directly influence the quantity and quality of our saddle-horses; but, independent of the almost certainty of improper persons—by favour or otherwise—being placed at the head of such an establishment, it is probable that it would labour under the disadvantage of being unattended by competition, and therefore we should lose the principal thing on which the excellence of production in all things so much depends.

One cause of the falling-off in the quality of our saddle-horses is the immense quantity of weedy and worthless refuse of the racing studs annually sold off and distributed among the population, who, regardless of their weak and attenuated forms, often breed from them just for the sake of pedigree, and thus are their numbers still further increased. The turf breeders of the present day only put their mares to stallions whose stock have most speed, disregarding every other consideration. There is also too much "in and in" breeding, merely for the purpose of following up a blood which has had success in racing; and the natural consequence is the constitutional weakness exhibited by many of our present breed of race-horses, which, for the first twelve months of their existence, require not only plenty of corn, but the whole of the milk of a cow. The age at which they are run (two years) renders this high feeding necessary, as, without unnaturally high feeding, many would not be worth the litter they lie upon, as is often the case when bred by persons not intending them for racing.

Those who have never seen a newly-dropped thorough-bred foal, would be surprised to see their utter and singular helplessness, many not being able to move about for several days after being foaled. This is the result of constitutional weakness in the parents, as the foals of all other breeds of horses in the world run about as soon as dropped. The whole country is at the present time overrun with light straight-legged animals, the weedings of racing studs, which, having been tried and found wanting in pace, are sent to a repository and sold for whatever they will fetch : there are plenty of these tilly-willy stallions travelling the agricultural districts in the season, their owners circulating cards containing lists of pedigrees—up to Flying Childers, or the Markham Arabian—at every roadside inn or market-house in the district they travel; many farmers are thus allured to give them a trial, and the result is generally disappointment and loss. Dealing men and judges of horses care nothing for pedigree when allied to a weak, shallow form. I have frequently seen, in the midland counties, and elsewhere, strange-looking animals produced by crossing with these racing stallions, having cart-horse quarters and thorough-bred heads and fore-hands.

There is no doubt that when the turf was first created it exercised an admirable influence over the breed of saddle horses; but when we contrast the present breed of race-horses with those of a century ago, we shall cease to wonder at the scarcity of good hacks, because the breeding of these has, to a great extent, always been influenced by the turf, as proved by the difference in substance of present steeple-chasers and hunters with those of former years. Race-horses are now bred for speed alone, and not for that union of qualities possessed by our former racers, whose produce for a time were the best saddle-horses in the world; and much as has been said and written against Arab horses, we have it recorded that on the first creation of the turf considerable numbers of them were imported into this country; but these were carefully selected by competent judges, not for their speed alone, but for compactness of form, and strength of loins, with endurance and bottom to run the distance, and carry the weight imposed upon them by the rules of our predecessors in racing matters.

On reference to the racing of former years, we find that the celebrated horse "Cartouche" was only fourteen hands high, yet no horse was able to run with him in his time, carrying from 8st. to 12st. In 1737, "Black Chance" at five years old won a plate at Durham, carrying 10st; with the same weight he won the Ladies' Plate at York, in that year, distance four miles. After this he won the King's Plate at Salisbury, then the King's Plate at Lewes, and lastly, the King's Plate at

Lincoln; all these in one season, every race four miles, and every race contested. In 1740, being eight years old, he won at Shrewsbury and Oswestry, carrying 13 stone. At Newmarket, in 1720, there were twenty-six matches, none less than four, some six miles. Fancy the very best of our present breed of race-horses carrying ten to thirteen stone four miles! even allowing them to run at a slower pace, they could not carry the weight Many break down at two years old with only a baby on their backs, after costing their owners thousands to bring them to the starting post.

Again, what purpose does the breeding of these stilty blood-sticks serve, and what are they worth when proved not fast enough for racing? Absolutely nothing, for they cannot carry an average-sized Englishman on a fair hard road, and their perpendicular shoulders and straight knee action render them very unsafe to ride. Thus, the breeders of such horses experience great losses by their hobby or avocation being a game of pure chance, so many blanks being drawn for one prize, for, no matter how good the pedigree or performances of their sires or dams, they cannot all win Derbys or Legers, and there are thousands that never win a shilling. But, if the old racing weights and distances were revived, the horses bred for racing purposes would be useful for general purposes, if, after the trial, they were found too slow for running, and this, to a considerable extent, would create a supply of useful saddle-horses, and, if not at a remunerating price to the breeders, would at least pay something towards their enormous stud expenses; their immense numbers of weeds or refuse now bringing them little more than the commission and expenses incurred by a journey to Tattersall's or Lucas's.

The falling-off in the quality and quantity of our saddle-horses is beginning to have its effect upon our cavalry service. I have seen some service in a cavalry regiment, and am enabled to state that the horses are too light to carry the men (in complete marching order), and are far short of that union of qualities which would render them strong enough to act in line, and do also the duty of light troops, with sufficient activity and endurance, through a long campaign. But my opinion is that such horses might be obtained from a cross between really well-selected Arab stallions (better than most we see in this country) and strong, roomy mares, a few of which may occasionally be picked up by good judges in England, as well as in the Emerald Isle. But our farmers and breeders have neither time, capital, nor inclination to embark in a speculation of searching for, and importing, Arab stallions, and a public company would have to wait a long time for a return or dividend on their capital; as the enormous staff of thoroughly competent directors and servants having to be paid during a delay of five or six years, which would elapse before anything could be brought into the market, would absorb the profits (if not the capital) for some considerable time. It is high time our government should be called upon to take some well-advised step for improving the quality and increasing the numbers of that class of horses from which our troopers are selected, to prevent a recurrence of the hurry and bustle we experienced during the Crimean war, when numerous agents were employed to buy up horses at double their value, and totally unfit to carry such men as were sacrificed in the battle of Balaclava; and although it may be said that the horses carried our soldiers nobly through that fearful struggle, it must be remembered that the five regiments which composed the light brigade went into action only six hundred strong, in place of three thousand, about the number of effective men when sent from home (and this was their first general action). A few more such fights would have annihilated every horse in the brigade; for although some of the men were in hospital, the majority of them were prevented from assisting their comrades for want of horses.

What, I would ask, is the use of enlisting soldiers, drilling, equipping, and paying them for years during peace, and when they are wanted for action having to purchase horses at an increased price, always consequent upon a sudden demand, and totally unfit to carry them; this I know, not only creates a feeling of discontent among the soldiers, but is a great injustice to them, and a positive loss to the country at large, which, of course, would be remedied by having a sufficient number of horses in reserve for remounts, in case of loss by disease, wounds, or deficiency in the supply of forage, as in the Crimean campaign.

I think by the employment of competent agents by government, to purchase the best class of English and Arab stallions, regardless of expense, and travelling them through the agricultural and breeding districts in the season, charging nothing for the first year, and appointing competent and disinterested district inspectors, to take care that no mares were served except such as are constitutionally sound and in every way calculated to produce a proper description of stock for cavalry as well as general purposes;—when farmers and breeders were convinced of the superiority in the produce, they would not object to pay a progressive increase on the small charge which might be made the second year for serving; and thus in time some return for the outlay would be made to government, independent of the boon conferred upon the whole community. But in the event of this plan being adopted, the export of horses should be prohibited for a considerable time, or foreign dealers would come (as they now do) in increased numbers, and over-run our fairs and breeding districts, selecting many of our best animals, and still create a scarcity and keep up the prices.

I know the practice of exporting horses to Germany and elsewhere is regularly but generally carried on by foreign merchants, resident in Manchester and the manufacturing districts, employing agents to scour the breeding districts before the great fairs are held, where so few really good horses are now to be seen. It appears to me queer policy for our government to allow the export of horses, while in most other continental nations it is strictly prohibited : it is certainly one way of diminishing our own strength to increase that of others, who may, eventually, fight us on the backs of our own bred horses; indeed, the French cavalry are now as well mounted as our own, for in every large horse fair may be seen agents of the French government buying up the very horses we so much require for ourselves, both for troopers and for general purposes.

I am glad to see those true specimens of Englishmen, members of hunts and masters of hounds, are getting more alive to the necessity of improving the breed of horses by encouraging contests among their own *bona fide* hunters: they are the class of men who could, by setting about it in earnest, give a great impetus to the breeding of horses with that requisite combination of blood and bone to carry the weight and go the pace. The other suggestion which I would submit to the notice of government, is the grant of an annual sum to the turf in the shape of plates—say 500 to 1,000 guineas each, to be run for, not only at the existing meetings, but in all the breeding districts in the United Kingdom. The horses to be the *bona fide* property of breeders, and not to run at less than five years old, carrying ten to twelve stone, a distance of three or four miles, and not less than twenty horses to start for the money.

This would be a powerful inducement to farmers, breeders, and the proprietors of racing studs to produce good hunters and saddle horses, as in the event of one of these valuable stakes dropping into the hands of a breeder in any district, it would act as a very powerful stimulant to the energies of others, and in a few years, the result would be the production of great numbers of valuable horses, which, if not fast enough to win the plates, would nevertheless be far superior to the best of our present races, for general purposes. This would not interfere with the existing rules of the Jockey Club, and their short spurts with the present breed of calf-kneed, antelope-shaped baby-jumpers, except that the increased supply of useful, compact, short-legged horses would put them to the trouble of destroying the refuse of their studs, in place of distributing them all over the country to degenerate the breed of such few of the old stamp as we may still have left in a corner here and there, inherited from our grandfathers.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORM AND ACTION OF GOOD SADDLE HORSES.

Good roadsters are become so scarce in this country that few people, except the wealthy, can obtain them, and very few, in consequence, have experienced the pleasure which riding one affords to a competent judge of action. When a horseman sits on an animal of this class, he need not take the trouble to pick his way when riding down a rough country lane or over broken ground, because the fore feet of a clever saddle horse, be the pace walk, trot, or canter, are always well forward, and fall flatly and evenly on the ground; and when in action the fore legs are sufficiently, but not too much bent, the action coming direct from the shoulders. But the most agreeable feature experienced in riding perfect saddle horses is, the ease and elasticity with which they move in all their paces, thereby sparing the rider any feeling of fatigue.

Not only is the number of good hacks and hunters become very limited, but those we have—except a few in the hands of masters of hounds and members of hunts—are too apt at an early age to display some of the infirmities to which their race are now so subject, in the shape of curbs, splints, and spavins, consequent upon the hurry the breeders are in to bring them into the market before they arrive at a proper working age. Thousands of capital saddle horses are annually sacrificed from this very cause.

I partly attribute the downward tendency of our breed of saddle horses to the rage for speed, which is now so prominent a feature on the English turf; but when we take into consideration what long-continued and careful selection on our turf has effected, when the sole object was speed, we may reasonably anticipate as important and beneficial results from equally judicious selection, when our object is to produce horses possessing that fine union of qualities so essential to good saddle horses. This change of system on the turf would be followed by a loss of some speed, but the new class of horses would have more strength and constitutional vigour, and those gentlemen whose principal hobby is betting, would win and lose their cash with as much facility as at present. The loss of speed in our race horses would amply compensate the public by the improvement in the strength and activity of our saddle horses, as well as by the increase in their numbers.

In the breeding of hunters and roadsters, strong enough to carry fair average weights, it is folly to have recourse to much racing blood, as the produce would lack compactness of form and physical strength. This is one cause why we have so few saddle horses able to carry about fourteen or fifteen stone, which are not so badly bred; but they both want activity and endurance, while our better-bred horses are so light and so short of strength, that they are unable to carry more than a very light weight. It is highly desirable that we should be able to buy saddle horses to carry us safely and agreeably at a reasonable price, for which the demand would always exceed the supply, as in that case a new class of customers would be created; for, besides invalids, there is a large mass of the English community who are confined to the house or office a portion of their time, by duties of more or less public importance, and many of whom, in middle-age, become somewhat heavy, and those who are fond of horse-exercise require animals to carry them of considerable strength; but in the present state of horse-breeding, such as are strong enough to do this, and be bought at a reasonable price, are too much like cart horses, having straight shoulders, and, what is worse, their fore-feet are a great deal too far under them, and their low breeding makes them sluggy, and after trotting a few miles they soon become tired, which an experienced rider will soon perceive by the shortening of their step, and if not well kept in hand they will fall.

There are hundreds of gentlemen whose close and sedentary labours are of great importance to their country, whose health and spirits would be much improved if they were able to get horses, at a reasonable price, sufficiently safe on which to take daily exercise. It is the dearth of stout, compact, deep-bodied, short-legged cob horses, from fourteen and a-half to fifteen hands and a-half high, with small heads, sound feet, oblique-formed shoulders, and muscular arms and thighs, which, if produced in great numbers, would gladden the hearts, brace the nerves, and lengthen the lives of our portly fathers, uncles, and grandfathers, who, by taking plenty of horse-exercise, would not require their usual antidote for gout, &c. I am old enough to remember such horses being plentiful, and while able to carry fifteen or sixteen stone with ease, were also so well bred as never to require the services of the clipper in winter, who now drives so profitable a trade; but suppose one of these stout elderly gentlemen who may be a good judge of horses, sits down in his easy chair and forms a picture in his mind's eye of such a horse as he would like to possess, how far, and which way would he steer, or how much would it cost him to obtain such an animal?

It is no uncommon thing for dealers in horses to ask from 100 to 300 guineas for a weight-carrying cob, with a combination of breeding, substance, and beauty of form; and when we take into consideration the difficulties they experience in procuring such, and the competition they encounter from agents of foreigners whose chief instructions are to purchase the best horses at unlimited prices, they will cease to wonder why the scanty supply fetch such enormous prices. I could write much more on the scarcity of saddle horses and its causes, but I shall confine my remarks to a definition of the class of animal which I should select as a good form for a saddle horse or hunter; but these unfortunately are, like good pictures, few and far between. Fine forms are best understood where they most abound, it being folly to reason with people upon forms of either art or nature, which they have never seen; therefore, to understand properly the best form for a saddle-horse, we must not only often see it, but become practically acquainted with the result, by frequently riding or driving well-formed horses.

There are few people who know what constitutes good shoulders in a horse, a good many asserting that they should be *fine,* meaning by this lean at the withers. It is, however, certain that the shoulders of a young horse intended to carry weight can hardly be too thick at that place, provided they are not too thick at the points or lower ends, while inclining their tops well back and leaving a good space between the end of the mane and the pommel of the saddle. There is a certain cross bone which connects the lower end of the shoulder blades with the horse's fore-legs which very materially affects his action. When this is too long it throws the fore-legs too much back, causing the horse to stand over like a cart horse; and such an animal, besides being unpleasant to ride, when at all tired, is very likely to come down. I am here stating what is well known to good judges, but I write for the many.

I would also observe that the form of shoulders I here recommend only *contribute* to good action, they alone do not *secure* it. Good hind-leg action is quite as important as good action in the fore-legs. The hock-joints should bend well, when in action, bringing the hind-feet well forward, but without striking the fore-feet, commonly called over-reaching. It is a common practice to pay little attention to the action of the hind-legs, so long as the horse possesses what is termed "fine knee-up action;" but all superior horses, of whatever breed, are eminently characterised by good hind-leg action; for be the shoulders ever so good, unless the action of the hind-leg is also good, the horse is uneasy to ride, because the action of the two sets of legs are not properly balanced, and, no matter how accomplished the rider may be, it is with difficulty he can accommodate his seat to the action of such a horse. Such a horse is unsafe to ride, and his rider, if a judge of action, feels that he is so; but if the action of the hind and fore-legs be properly balanced, the rider feels his horse firm under him, and that he cannot very well come down. Indeed, in this case, he seems to be riding *up-hill*, while, under opposite circumstances, he seems to be always riding *down hill.*

One important point, which I consider has been gained by the breeding of horses for speed, is, the great length between the hip-bone and the hock, as exhibited in the greyhound: and although the possession of this point is not so absolutely necessary, yet I, for one, should be inclined to give its possessor the preference for a hunter of the present day, for the horse either is, or ought to be, capable of great speed. But our hunters had not formerly this shape, and did not so much require it. There is, however, one objection against any *excessive* length between hip and hock, which is, that it frequently causes over-reach, a most disagreeable infirmity for either a hunter or roadster. A horse's hips should be wide, to carry weight, and his loins highly muscular, but the lower ends of his shoulders should be light. His chest cannot be too full, but it may be too wide for speed, as well as for agreeable action, causing a rolling motion, very unpleasant to the rider.

Great depth of chest is a powerful recommendation, and the ribs before the girths cannot be too long, but the back ribs (when much speed is required) should be rather short. For very fine action the shoulder-blades must be long, while they cannot be so without inclining well back. If a horse so formed has good hind-leg action, he will be very valuable as an active weight-carrying cob, because this form of shoulders is, I regret to say, now rarely to be found amongst our saddle horses, as in the majority of them that come within the pale of a moderate price, the girths are continually slipping forward, causing the rider to sit on the horse's withers rather than on his back; and this is one cause of horses falling down, as the weight of the rider pressing on the top of their shoulders seriously interferes with their free action, and when they make a slight stumble it is next to impossible for them to recover their feet.

The best height for horses intended as hacks of the first class is about 15 hands. Tall horses are not so good for hacks as those of lower stature, as they do not move with so much ease and lightness, wearing their legs more, and causing more fatigue to their riders. The majority of tall horses are, now-a-days, only tall because they have long legs, which are very objectionable, as they never wear well, and are mostly allied with a very shallow body. These horses may do well enough when a showy appearance is the only object in view; but they are not calculated for hard work, or to ride in hilly country. I may dismiss this subject by remarking that I would not advise the purchaser to reject a horse just because he does not happen to possess all the good qualities I have here recommended, as they will remember the old adage, "That there never was a perfect horse."

Standing, or indulging ourselves wth a chair for the charge of a penny, by the rails in Rotten-row, about half-past twelve or five o'clock, at the season of the year when all the world are in London, we shall witness a sight not to be equalled in any other country upon earth. The ladies, gentlemen, and children on horse and pony back are innumerable, or at least it is impossible to count them. Some walk their horses, many trot and canter, and a few gallop.

The value of horse exercise appears to be more and more appreciated, especially for ladies, and no wonder, for, independent of the benefit derived from it, both to mind and body, and the enjoyment of being carried pleasantly over the ground, amidst a host of happy smiling groups, ladies with good figures and pretty faces invariably look well anywhere and in any costume, but many even of these fascinating creatures look much better on horseback than on foot; but to appear to the very greatest advantage it is absolutely necessary that they should sit their horses neatly, and handle them with that nice combination of firmness and gentleness which can only be acquired by those who have good nerves and a natural taste for this delightful accomplishment; to be perfected under the eye of a competent and patient instructor.

Were I a lady, I would never appear in Rotten-row until I could sit my horse and handle my reins with perfect ease and grace; for I should consider that, being much more conspicuous when on horseback than on foot, I was only making an exhibition of my incapacity. A bad figure looks bad indeed on horseback, as the habit is not calculated to conceal it. There are many ladies, though, who look very awkward on foot, who shine on horseback; and, on the contrary, there are many who are faultless in figure when walking, who look crooked and deformed on horseback; this having been brought about by their self-taught style of riding, or imperfect instruction. No lady would think of dancing at a public ball unless she had taken instruction in dancing; yet there are hundreds of ladies who ride (and make exhibitions of themselves) in Rotten-row, before they even know how to handle their reins or keep their bodies steady in the saddle. To all such as these, I would say, take instruction from a competent riding-master; you will look so much better, and be much safer, and the exercise will be so much more enjoyable.

There are many riding-schools in London, but riding-schools are useless without competent instructors. I have had many years' practical experience in the army and in the hunting-field, and therefore trust that my fair readers will consider me competent to recommend a tutor to their notice, who, I can vouch, understands his profession in its entirety, and that is Mr. or the Messrs. Blackman, of Kensington-gate. I have no personal knowledge with any of these gentlemen, but I am acquainted with numerous ladies and gentlemen who have taken instructions from them, and who speak in high terms of the kindness and patience bestowed upon them while taking their lessons; and from their manner of handling their reins, and style of riding their horses in the parks and hunting field, I am enabled to speak with confidence as to the efficient manner in which they have been instructed.

The Messrs. Blackman have an out-door manége or hunting ground, seven acres in extent, attached to their riding-school, which must give them a preference over those having a school only: and being extensive dealers in horses, their pupils have an incalculable advantage over those establishments with a limited stud, as I consider the frequent change of horses during the pupil's instruction of the most essential importance; for there is a wide difference in the action and style of horses' going, as also in their mouths and tempers; there is also a difference in the shape of the back and withers, length and formation of neck. Nothing gives a lady more confidence on horseback, and improves her hands and figure more than a frequent change of horses, as by riding one horse too long her body becomes fixed in one posture, often leaning too much in one direction, and she also becomes too much attached to this particular horse, until she feels nervous when she has to mount another, because her seat does not at once accommodate itself to the difference in the horse's action.

Riding masters, who do not understand their profession, are also ignorant of the kind of horse most suitable to carry a lady, and these are very much to blame, for presuming to practise a profession which they do not understand; for no man, who has a spark of respect for a woman, would place her on the back of a partially-broken, ill-made, or unsafe horse during her early lessons. But I regret to say, that many ladies may be seen daily in Rotten-row on horses no more suitable for them than a rhinoceros would be for the best rider to her Majesty's stag-hounds.

I would select the best-made horse I could find to carry a lady, with a good mouth, and a good temper, good sound legs and feet, which he need not lift too high, if he put them flatly and evenly on the ground, without first digging in his toes. A horse from fourteen to fifteen hands and a half high is quite tall enough to carry a lady, providing he is a deep-bodied horse, and with powerful oblique-shaped shoulders. It is quite a mistake to place a lady on a thorough-bred racing weed, though it is of frequent occurrence; they are too weak in the shoulders to carry women, who ride heavy and uneven on this part of a horse, the greater part of the weight being on the near shoulder, and they ride more forward than men.

The new and prevalent fashion of ladies riding at a trot, makes the selection of strong-shouldered horses of increased importance, as, in the rising from the stirrup, the weight bears all on one side. I like to see a woman trot if she sits neatly, although the pace is anything but suitable to the side-saddle. But there is not one woman in twenty who can rise properly in the saddle while indulging in the trot, and unless she can do this, nothing looks more ridiculous, for she twists her body, with a sharp, ludicrous wriggle, completely out of the saddle, and throws her whole weight upon the left stirrup-leather, which not only looks bad, but is exceedingly dangerous. A neat rider, male or female, will never rise so far out of the saddle in the trot, that daylight can be seen between the seat and the saddle. Were I asked to select a horse to carry a lady of average weight, regardless of price, I would buy the cleverest hunter I could find; for such a one is safer than any other horse. Having been used to rough, unbroken ground, and galloped over ridge and furrow, he is less likely to trip or fall down, neither is it likely that he would shy, or be startled by discordant noises, after being well schooled in the hunting-field.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ZEBRA AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, REGENT'S PARK.

While walking recently in the Zoological Gardens, my attention was drawn to a crowd of persons standing round the loose box of the notorious zebra, which Mr. Rarey (two years ago) described as the "wild zebra of the African Desert," and said to be thoroughly subdued, and made docile by that gentleman. But, as far as I could see, not the least change has taken place in his manners.

For the information of those of my readers who have not seen this notorious animal, "who screamed and yelled, and was so terrible in his beauty," as the reporters (who are unaccustomed to horses) described him, I may say that he is about the size of a large donkey, or twelve hands high; he is in very fine condition, with a decidedly cunning expression of countenance, but far from what I should consider a malignant expression, although the treatment to which he was subjected in my presence was sufficient of itself to make the most docile animal in creation vicious; and, with all deference to his keeper, I think the sooner a reformation takes place in this treatment, the better it will be for the animal. But, like Mr. Rary's exhibitions with vicious horses, it may form a portion of the policy of the Zoological Society to excite the animal to a display of his vicious propensities, for the sake of gratifying a morbid taste; for I am sure no benefit can ever accrue to the animal, or to those who take a delight in such unnatural treatment as that to which the zebra appears to be regularly subjected by his keeper.

The loose box, or, as Mr. Rarey has it, the den of the zebra, is about eight feet square, fenced off with a lattice, through which he can pass his muzzle. And this he frequently did, without the least display of those worrying propensities which we have been told he possessed; indeed, when I passed my hand down his forehead, he appeared anxious for a repetition of the soothing, and evidently enjoyed it. But his keeper seemed bent upon irritating his temper as much as possible, and for this purpose he was armed with a pole about seven feet long, barbed at the end with iron, in shape similar to a boat-hook. With this he continually kept poking the animal on the loins and thighs, and the zebra responded in much the same manner as the most patient donkey would have done when subjected to the same ridiculous treatment. "Oh! ain't he a vicious brute," said that portion of the enlightened spectators who had heard through the newspapers of Mr. Rarey and "the wild zebra of the African Desert." The "stirring him up with the long pole" appeared to be a part of the keeper's duty; and most assiduous he was, too, in its performance; for during the ten minutes I remained, he never allowed the persecuted wretch a moment's peace, and after every application of the hook he rolled his eyes round to notice the effect which the zebra's answering kick had upon his delighted audience.

I retired disgusted with this miserable display of vice in "the wild zebra of the African Desert." But on my way from his den I asked another keeper whether Mr. Rarey's treatment, during the long time he had him in hand, had been of any benefit to the animal?

"Lor' bless you, he is ten times worse than ever," said he.

"And no wonder, while his keeper is continually teasing him with that boat-hook," said I.

"Yes, but Mister Rarey says as how he has tamed him; Lor' bless you, sir, why, if Mister Rarey went intu that den, the zebra would worry him, and crunch him up, bones an' all. Why, it took seven or eight on us to ketch him and get him intu the cage, when first he went tu Kinnerton-street, in Belgravy, for the nobs to see Mister Rarey hopperate his system on him, an' my eyes, sir, he made Mister Rarey look nine roads for Sunday. An' after keeping him all the time he sent him back wusser an' wusser; that's what I call walking over the natives in style, sir, ain't it? But," he continued, "what d'ye think of the fight, sir?" (It was a few days after the battle between Sayers and Heenan.)

"Well," said I, "speaking of the fight reminds me of a question I may ask you, in reference to Mr. Rarey's system of horse-taming. You have heard of Mr. Spurgeon, the great preacher?"

"Oh, yes! I heard on him."

"Well, suppose that he had succeeded in converting Tom Sayers, and dissuaded him from practising his favourite calling (considered by many a vicious practice)?"

"Yes, sir, I'm a listening on yer, sir," said he.

"Well, suppose Mr. Spurgeon so far forgot himself as to poke Tom Sayers' rib with a boat-hook, don't you think Master Tom would give the reverend gentleman one for his nob in return, just by way of teaching him a lesson in humanity?" said I.

"Yessir, I du, 'an he would serve Mister Spuggun jolly well right tu, sir."

"Then how can you expect the zebra to be tame, or to keep his heels on the ground, while being punished and irritated with that boat-hook?"

"Have you seen the 'potamus and the great salamander, sir?" said he, as he made a move from the neighbourhood of the zebra, without answering my question.

"Never mind the 'potamus nor the great salamander," said I to the keeper; "tell me something more about Mr. Rarey and the zebra."

"Well, you see, sir, when first Mister Rarey vos introduced tu the zebra, for tu tame him, he was ready cotched, and tackled tu his hand; he was muzzled, tu; vot du yer think o' that? and I suppose all these vicious hosses he hopperates on are muzzled, tu, for him, before he touches 'em. I call him a very 'cute cove, that Mister Rarey. I suppose it did please the nobs of Belgravey, for tu see our mister zebra a trying of his werry best for tu git away from him, when he vos a punishing on him; he's werry cunning, sir, is the zebra, but not so werry wicious, 'cept when his temper's riled; he won't stand a riling much. Lor', you should a' seen him when fust he vos let out o' the cage in Belgravey. But before he vos let out o' the cage, Mister Rarey strapped up one of his fore-legs, and put a gag-bit in his mouth—a piece of wood, nearly as thick as your wrist, sir. This made the zebra kind of laugh like, and he rolled his eyes round, and turned the whites on 'em back, as much as tu say, 'D——n you, Mister Rarey, but I'll see you jolly well sweated before I'll lie down and make a fule o' myself to please the flats wot paid you ten guineas each, for tu see me humbled with a Yankee.' And blowed if he vos not as good as his word—or his thoughts—which yer like, sir; for arter the three men wot vos a holding on him wi' ropes, had left loose on him and cut their stick out o' the circus, the game began, blowed if it didn't. Oh, crikey! I heerd all about it since, (for Rarey vos tu cute tu let us chaps see his caper), the zebra looked a kind o' sulky at the Yankee, fust, like as if he vos a treatin' him wi' contempt, but, my eyes, if he didn't soon begin tu find the Yankee a teazer, arter all. The gittin' him in the box, muzzling on him, and gagging him, riled his temper to begin with, and when the Yankee began tu take liberties with him, he screamed out as much as tu say, 'Tu h—ll with you, let me alone;' but the Yankee fastened a strap to his other fore-leg, and one to his off hind one, so that you see, when these two straps were pulled the two legs on his off side were taken from him, and mister zebra had nothing to stand on but his near hind-leg, and down he cume on his knees; but Lor', sir, how he did struggle; a gent wot saw him told me it took three hours and a half tu make him lay down, an' then, you see, sir, he vos fairly exhausted. But, sez I tu the gent, Mister Rarey sez in his 'vertisements that he hopperates without the least 'fisickal force.' 'Oh, that's all nonsense,' said the gent. Well, thinks I, it's a nice caper tu say it is done wi'out 'fisickal force,' and then for tu throw the puir critters of hosses down wi' hobbles, right in the face of the greenhorns who hev paid ten guineas for tu see a hoss made tu lie down, accordin' tu his 'vertisements."

"Well, well," said I, "I know all about that. How did Mr. Rarey get on with the zebra?"

"Why, the gent told me as how, after he had lain a minute or two, he rose agin on tu his knees, and began for tu try to get away from the Yankee agin, but finding it all no use, he lay quiet enough at last, an' the Yankee pulled the straps off, and began to show off his capers upon him; he stood on his ribs, but, Lor', sir, mister zebra wouldn't hev that, he turned the white of his eye up to the Yankee, as much as to say, 'Yer impident divil, yer, vot's yer game now? are you a goin' for tu make a door-mat ov a gentlemanly zebra?' an' wi' a sharp grunt, as much as tu say, 'tu blazes wi' yer!' an' a kind ov a wriggle, like a new-cotched snig, he nipped up agin sharp, and down the Yankee came, right across him. Oh, crikey! didn't he roll over quick out of mister zebra's way; this vos a good deal more than he hed a bargained for, d'ye see, for the hanimal would lie still enough when let alone, cos vy, he vos exhausted, but he vos game, an' wouldn't be annoyed with the Yankee a trying to put on him; so arter a while he vos allowed for tu git up. 'Dear a me, how tame he is—he's quite an altered animal!' said some o' the haudience. But when the Yankee led him out 'o the circus, he kicked up his heels, and tu those vot understands the zebra language, he said, as plain as could be, 'Dear a me, I am tame, I think—I feels about as tame as a mad dog.' "

"Then you think he's no better off, after all the fuss and bother the newspapers have made about him," said I.

"Lor' bless you, sir, I've told you he isn't, and if he vos thrown down seven hundred and seventy-seven times a day, for seven hundred and seventy-seven years, he would be just about seventeen times as wicious as he vos before his wisit tu the round house in Belgravy."

CHAPTER V.

SAVAGE RACE-HORSES.

We have very many vicious race-horses, some almost as savage as tigers, more dangerous to approach than Van Amburgh's lions, and certainly more so than Mr. Smith's performing hippopotamus. But how comes our racing sires to be so vicious? It is probable that some of their sires or grandsires may have been savages, and that their naughty dispositions have been transmitted to their progeny; but go back to the great-grandsire or dam, if you like, the question is still the same—how came they to be savage? for horses are not naturally savage. No; the cause of their being savage, in the first place, most assuredly originated with ourselves, not with nature. There is an old saying, "The devil is good tempered when he is pleased," which, I suppose, means when nothing is done to or demanded of him that is contrary to his inclinations.

We all know that it requires considerable good sense and command of temper, even in man, to avoid ill-humour or resistance when annoyed, even though he may know that annoyance is unavoidable. How, then, I would ask, can we expect an irrational animal like a colt to bear it without a strenuous, and, perhaps, violent effort to resist it? It should be borne in mind that the appearance of man is probably as strange and alarming to a young colt as the appearance of a lion would be to us if we were to meet him alone and unarmed in the desert. It remains with ourselves to cause our companionship with the colt, or the horse in after-years, to be hailed with confidence and pleasure, or regarded with alarm, mistrust, and hatred.

Illiterate and brutal colt-breakers may say, "What do we care whether a colt fears us, hates us, or loves us? If he won't go a-head, and face the torturing bit and harassing hand, the spurs will precious sharp make him; and if he tries to shift me from his back, I'll either show him that he can't or I'll get off and cut him to pieces in the longe." By this treatment, the colt may be subdued for a time, but we need not make it a subject of wonder if his temper is spoiled, and that, being provoked to resistance, he will most likely begin to defend himself from the brutality of man, until, by a repetition of such treatment, he will be confirmed in vice, and finally transmit its tendency to posterity.

Not only racing stock, but colts bred for ordinary purposes, should be accustomed from the very first to be caressed with the hand, and familiarised with the voice of man; if they never have any cause, they will neither fear nor hate us; but, on the other hand, if they benefit by the sound of our voice, and our entering the field where they are gambolling in the pleasures of foalhood, be it only to the extent of a slice of carrot, or a bit of bread, from the hand, they will be more than half trained, because their confidence in man will be thoroughly established, and they will not be suspicious of harm or anything being done to them by one from whom they have never received anything but kindness.

Every thoroughbred foal, at a very early age, has, or ought to have, a light leather head-collar put on him. Now if a man rudely seizes this collar (as is frequently the case) in order to hold the foal for any purpose, by forcible means, he will very naturally resist; the man will tug one way, and the foal another; the man may succeed in retaining his hold, but what is the consequence? The foal is so alarmed by the proceeding that he loses confidence in man, and it will be a work of time and patience to get near him in future; indeed, nothing but driving him into a narrow corner or a shed, and surrounding him with assistants, will attain the man's object in again getting hold of him, when a repetition of the tugging and struggling takes place. Thus the foal is taught, as it were, from the first to resist the will of his natural master. Need we wonder that this resistance should increase until the foal has acquired natural strength sufficient to gain in some shape or other, at some time, a point over those that he considers to be (if treated in this manner) his enemies.

Only those who know the nature of horses thoroughly can form any idea of the surprising quickness of perception in their instinct to follow up the least advantage they may temporarily gain when attempted to be restrained, or coerced into anything contrary to their will. For this the horse is probably beaten on the spot, or, what is worse, corrected in the stable; and the ill-feeling between him and mankind is still further augmented, until they scarcely ever meet without an attempt to bite or kick on one side, and a curse with a blow from a bludgeon on the other.

I do not mean to assert that all, or even the majority of our racing colts are subjected to the treatment above described; but it is a lamentable fact, that they are made to fear or hate man more than any other animal, or thing, with which it is general for them to come in contact; but colts bred for general purposes are almost invariably (like some racing stock) left to the care, or rather dominion, of illiterate, coarse-minded persons, who think the display of power, and rude subjugation of every colt entrusted to them, manifests their efficiency: such conceited men as these laugh at the idea of conciliating and instilling confidence into the instinct of a colt (which is the groundwork of training all animals intended for the service or companionship of man), when by brute force they can effect their purpose. But this they fail to do with a high-couraged, entire blood-colt, as five times out of ten their so-called training produces either a wild, nervous, or viciously disposed animal, that after having been brought by them to this state, has either to remain so, and thereby highly dangerous to all whose duties bring them in contact with him, or be subjugated by violence, and coercion which may in some way injure him for the purpose he has been bred, but which never ought to have been rendered necessary, and which would never have become so, had only familiarities with mankind and their wishes been brought about from the first by gentleness, caresses, and reward.

There are few towns in England, Ireland, or Scotland, where the traveller will fail to meet with an arrogant, self-taught horse-breaker, with his heavy mouthing bits, cutting whip, and sharp, spurred boots, whose principal business is not so much to teach, but to tease and torture the poor ignorant colt into a state of frenzy, and then take credit for abusing and terrifying him into submission by the infliction of acute pain and physical means alone. To attempt to teach or argue with such men as these is the most certain method to bring upon yourself a torrent of abuse, and very possibly provoke a breach of the peace. On the other hand, it must be admitted that we have many horse-trainers who are what they profess to be, viz., men with an average amount of common sense, having a thorough knowledge of the horse's nature and capacities, which they have minutely studied; and they treat every colt that is submitted to them as a pupil, and not as a slave or an enemy; and they have, nevertheless, a sufficiency of courage and self-possession, combined with skill and judgment, to nip in the bud any act of undue rebellion or disobedience on the part of the colt, without unnecessary violence or punishment, by way of revenge or bravado, before a staring crowd. They are gifted with a patience that nothing can wear out, and a temper that nothing (in the shape of horse-flesh) can ruffle. They are never in a hurry, and go through their work in a style and manner that proves them in every way qualified for the business of educating the horse by teaching him to regard man as his natural master and friend.

The employment of horse-breakers should be estimated by its results, without reference to pecuniary considerations; and the union of interests between the man and the horse, in sympathy of affections and companionship, as also in the preservation of life and limb, would amply make up the trifling difference in the charges, to say nothing of our imperative duty to place the noble animal in the hands of those trainers who treat him with that kindness and consideration which all true men and Christians acknowledge he so richly deserves.

A horse will work until he drops and dies in the service of man; he cheerfully endures misery and suffering, arising from hunger, thirst, chronic disease, and painful or incurable lameness, which is every day to be seen in London and the highways and bye-ways of the provinces; but a high-couraged horse will invariably revolt (if he has the power) against injustice and brutality.

Who has not seen the country carter, with his oaths and the butt-end of his whip; the London cabman, with a piece of gutta percha, or twisted wire, at the end of his lash; the butcher's boy, with his left spur constantly pricking his pony's side; or the swell who hires a horse and gig on a Sunday afternoon at the livery stables wantonly, and indiscriminately punish the horse when he is exerting and straining his poor attenuated frame and tottering limbs to the very utmost of his power, in their service, and for the gratification of their pleasures.

But now, as ever will be, I am afraid, to the end of time, the high-mettled racer, the grand-stepping and fashionable carriage horse, the favourite old hunter, and the idolised child's pet pony has only to be afflicted with disease or lameness, and he is at once consigned to drudgery for life, and that, too, when he is least able to bear it; he is too often whipped, spurred, overwrought, and starved by these cruel, selfish owners, until his career is ended in the ditch, or by the more friendly pole-axe, or blow-pipe of the knacker.

CHAPTER VI.

TEMPERATE HUNTERS.

WHAT a pleasure it is to ride a quiet, clever hunter. Some young sparks are fond of a hot-headed, curvetting, jimcrack bloodstick, which they will coolly tell you is an out-and-out hunter. But look for them when and where a hunter's work has to be done, and you, on your steady snaffle-bridle horse, will find they are tailed-off and "shut up." Indeed many of them are never seen after the meet; for, if their butterfly riders could sit em straight after the tail of the hounds, the fretting, prancing interval between the "meet" and the "find" has taken the little "go" out of them they ever possessed. Few horses, however, are fidgetty in their natures; but there is a class of riders who, when they sit a horse that does not know how to "buck-jump" or rear, are constantly harassing him with hand or leg, merely for the sake of being noticed themselves.

I know many who dress in the brightest of scarlet, and best of buckskin smalls, who never saw a fox killed by hounds in their lives.

There are hundreds of clever hunters completely spoiled by bad riders, who have neither hands to handle them nor seats to sit on them; and, although I am well aware that numbers of horses are sold as hunters, which possess not a single point requisite for a hunter even of the second class, yet I also know that there are gentlemen who profess to be hunting *men,* who buy and pay a good price to respectable horse-dealers for the best of horses, but who in a few weeks will completely spoil any horse in the world, both in temper and condition—solely because their grooms neglect them in the stables, and they themselves are deficient in the requisite nerve and skill to ride them in the field, and such gentlemen as these never have a horse to suit them; they are continually sending them back to their dealers and changing them, until either themselves or the dealer are out of all patience, and the business is sometimes wound up by a lawsuit.

But it is not policy on the part of the dealers to have lawsuits with gentlemen, for there is an unjust prejudice against horse-dealers in general, although those who are "licensed dealers" are as honest in their business transactions as any other class of tradesmen, and I have known many of them take back horses, and return the money to purchasers, when the horse has been absolutely spoiled in mouth, temper, and condition, sooner than have a dispute or lawsuit. But there is about as much honour on the part of gentlemen who do this as there would be in their wives wearing a shawl for a month or two, and then sending it back to the mercer, with a threat that if he does not return the money it will be sold for whatever it will fetch, and he will be sued for the difference.

A friend of mine, who is a large breeder, sold a horse as a clever fencer to a gentleman a short time ago. He returned him in the course of a few days, stating that he could not make him jump. I rode and subjected him to a trial a few days after, and can conscientiously affirm that a sweeter jumper never carried me over a fence, and I have ridden as many horses as most men. I know the gentleman who sent him back must have had neither hands nor seat, for as I pulled him gently together, and felt his beautiful mouth, with the single snaffle bridle, he answered to the easy appeal of my hands, and bowed his smart, intelligent head, as much as to say, "I'm at *your* service, sir," and walked (as only a temperate, well-broken horse can walk) *quietly*, with a long, steady, business-like stride; and as the trial ground is interspersed with every description of fence, after having satisfactorily tested his walking qualities, I gave him his head, and as the splendid creature bounded over the springing turf towards the first brushwood fence, there was no rushing or turning his head to the right or left for a bolt, as he seemed to say by his actions, "Give me my head, and sit me steady, and 'forward is my motto.'" Yes, my beauty! thought I, you *shall* have your head, for how can you jump unless you have it? still I'll keep a steady supporting feel on your mouth. Now for it—one of your ears is pointed forward, and now the other, in rapid succession; the rein tightens. Steady, boy! Hie over, my fawn! There! why I never felt you drop, for it is the strength and elasticity of your pasterns which enables you to bound from the turf again like those India-rubber balls the children play with in the parks of London.

And now we come to these Irish swamps, the sod banks, and stone walls. There, my boy, that's it; measure your ground, and go a little nearer this time before you take off, because the leaps are higher. Hie over again, my charmer! bang go your heels against the other side of the stiff sod bank, with a sound like the thud of a cannon ball when it strikes an earthwork, as you drop your fore-feet neatly and firmly on the turf; a second after and your hind shoes kiss the ground, and, at the same instant, your fore-legs are stretched out for the first of a series of delightful bounds over this wide-sweeping meadow, after which you shall charge that stone wall, which lies right in your front. Here it is, my boy; a trifle higher than the sod bank; but you have measured it by your eyes—I can tell by the working of your beautiful ears. Hoo-roo! Oh, how I like you!

Now for the water-jump at the bottom of this gentle slope. Whew! you bird on the wing! I never felt you fly over this, but I can feel you galloping as strong as a castle under me. I glance my eye down your fore-arm, as you bend your well-formed neck and head, which playfully answers to the gentle supporting feel of my hands, and I can perceive the prominent muscles of your fore-arm stand out like a piece of the twisted coils of the Atlantic telegraph cable, and you are neither blowing nor sweating; your eye is as bright as a diamond, and your coat shines like a mirror, your condition is perfect, and it is a pleasure to ride you, because I know that I am not distressing you. But here we are at this side the stiff blackthorn bullfinch, higher than yourself, with not a ray of daylight to be seen through it. Your ears play, and your head nods, and again I know that you will top it. "Yoi-over!" I say, as you leave the ground like a full-grown grasshopper, and suspend me and yourself—with your four legs clipped under your belly—in mid-air for an instant, and drop them, feet downwards, with a regular flop, into the ploughed field on the other side; but the superiority of your condition, the strength of bone and muscle, and the dash of pure blood which courses through your prominent veins, stands to you in this your time of need, for the stiff dirt is rent to atoms, and flies about in all directions as you gallop through the long ploughed field to the most difficult jump in the lot—a double post and rail.

Can you do it? Yes, I feel your body working under me; you are preparing for business, I know; but remember it's *double,* and I must give you a reminder; a sharp clip with the inside of the legs, but no rowel; a slight shake of the reins, just to let you know that a little *extra* energy is required—and well you answer to these signals. For—Hie, over, my jewel! we are safe in our places on the other side; a rolling seat would make my hands unsteady, and a job of the spur at the same instant would have soured your temper, and totally destroyed the cordial feeling between us, which has enabled us to surmount every obstacle; for the rolling, unsteady seat is sure to be allied to a pair of heavy, harassing hands, and frequent misapplications of the spur would spoil even you, who are as good a jumper as ever stood on iron.

These were my thoughts as I rode and dismounted this noble creature, which the gentleman had sent back to the breeder, because he said that he could not, or would not jump, simply because he had neither nerve nor skill to manage him.

"A fine-mannered horse, isn't he?" said my friend as the lad led him back to his box, without a twisted hair on his shining skin.

"Very, indeed," I replied; "but deep-levered bits and tight curbs, handled by inexperienced riders, will spoil any horse in the world." And in this case it was fortunate the gentleman returned the horse so soon after sale, for a few more days' mawling him about would have completely ruined him, and he would have been returned without a shilling of compensation. However, a few days' quiet handling brought him back to his old form.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW TO DETECT IMPERFECT VISION OR BLINDNESS IN HORSES.

THE novice in horse-flesh may have good grounds for suspicion as to the existence of imperfect vision or blindness, when the horse moves his ears in a constant and rapid motion, directing them in quick succession to every quarter from whence the least sound proceeds. His action is lofty and faltering, and he lifts up his feet and replaces them on the ground as if stepping over some obstacle, when there is actually nothing to impede his free progression.

But, notwithstanding that these symptoms would be sufficient to create suspicion, there are other causes (besides imperfect vision) by which the same, or similar symptoms, would appear in horses. For instance, if a horse with the most perfect pair of eyes were led from a dark stable into the blazing sunshine, the sudden contraction of the pupil of his eye would render it impossible, for a few moments, for him to see but very indistinctly; hence would arise the same symptoms of uncertainty in his movements, until the pupil becomes steady after the sudden contraction.

The dilation and contraction of the pupil of the horse's eye furnishes the principal means of ascertaining whether the blindness exists in one eye or both, as this pupil varies in size, according to the degree of light which is brought to bear upon it. In a dark stable the pupil is expanded, so that a greater proportion of light falls upon the cornea; but if the horse is led to the door of the stable, the pupil will contract, so as to exclude more light than could be endured, and if suddenly exposed to the sun, the aperture will be all but closed; therefore the novice should carefully notice these variations in the pupil, whether they contract or expand equally by the increase or decrease of the light—which he may readily perceive by advancing the horse's head to the open door or window of the stable, and backing him again into the darkness, until he is satisfied as to the perfection or imperfection of the horse's vision.

But if the horse should be examined in the open air, the novice should first notice whether both pupils are of exactly the same size. After this he should carefully place his hand, so as not to alarm the horse, over each eye, to shade off the light, and hold it there for a short time, noticing the extent to which the pupil dilates, then passing his hand over the other eye, ascertain whether it also dilates to the same extent, and if he should still be uncertain, let him place both hands in the position of shades over both the eyes of the horse, and he will at once perceive (if his own vision be good) whether they are perfect, and, if not, which of the two are imperfect.

I would suggest to all owners of horses the importance of admitting plenty of light and pure air into their stables, for I am satisfied that nothing tends more to injure the eyes of a horse and impair his vision than dark, or badly-ventilated stables. Every man who keeps horses for the purpose of assisting him in earning his livelihood would be neglecting a very important portion of his business, by inattention to the lighting, draining, and ventilation of his stables, to say nothing of his imperative duty to treat his horses in the manner they so richly deserve.

I maintain that horses are as deserving of pure dwellings as the best of God's creatures. The efforts of our Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the activity of its officers, is sufficient evidence of their philanthropy; but I have never known a conviction for shutting up a horse, and half smothering him in the rank, pestiferous atmosphere of a non-drained or ventilated stable, and still this will be admitted by all men, possessed of a shadow of common-sense, to be gross cruelty.

In every town and village in the United Kingdom may be found stables without drainage, and, even during hot weather, with very little, if any ventilation. I have, at various places in my travels, frequently been present at the opening of these badly-ventilated dwellings for horses, the first thing in the morning, as I have no doubt some of my readers have also; therefore they will agree with me in saying that the atmosphere is sufficient to stifle many a man, and quite sufficient of itself to engender a variety of diseases among the miserable occupants.

There are thousands of stables in which the door is the only aperture for the ingress or egress of pure air; and even this is, in most instances, closed, both when the horse is at rest, as at work or exercise; thus he has, while in the stable, or, rather, horse oven, to breathe the same air over and over again, inhaling the ammonia which is constantly rising from the interstices of the irregular pavement, or mud floor, and this is not only a constant cause of misery to the horse, but by acting most injuriously on his eyes, entails a serious loss to his owner, by decreasing his value.

There are few respectable builders, now-a-days, who do not understand the erection of well-ventilated stables; but where owners of horses cannot afford to have their old stables rebuilt, they might, at least, break out windows to admit light and air, and also, at a trifling expense, drain the floors; and thus, by keeping the air cool and sweet, they would, to a certain extent, neutralize the effects which a stifling and impure atmosphere will sooner or later entail upon their horses.

The principal causes of horses shying are imperfect vision, or near-sightedness, constitutional nervousness, want of exercise—especially when confined in a dark stable—and being unused to certain objects. For the two first causes there is no positive cure, but much may be done by way of amelioration. Many people have a way of forcing a horse that shies immediately up to everything he appears to dread, more for the purpose of showing themselves off as riders than for any benefit such a proceeding would be to the horse.

A near-sighted horse should be allowed a reasonable time to examine an object of which he may appear to be afraid before he is urged with whip and spur to move close up to it—for if the rider insists on his overcoming his fears in an instant, the consequence will be, that when he sees the same or a similar object again, he will remember the last unpleasantness between him and his rider, and prepare himself for a renewal of opposition; and this will increase every time the same rider attempts to force him up to the same or any other object which may frighten him. There are a class of men, or rather horse bullies, who fancy the horse should fear nothing but themselves, and by creating and constantly fostering ill-feeling by the application of brute force, as developed in rough-riding, by their cruel and unnecessary use of whips and spurs every time a horse is frightened, they succeed in creating more fear and unsteadiness in shying horses than is produced by natural causes, whatever they may be.

There are a variety of objects at which a near-sighted horse will shy, such as a dark spot—horse droppings and the like—on a white limestone road, a heap of stones on the road-side, meeting or passing a load of hay, an omnibus or a wheelbarrow; but the most dreaded object is approaching a railway arch when a train is passing over. This, when the horse is in harness and constitutionally timid, is attended with considerable danger to a novice, and too much cannot be done in the way of soothing him and allaying his fears, by every means in the driver's power; as, for instance, if he be aware of the existence of this infirmity, and can himself see the train at a distance, it would be the wisest step for him to turn the horse's head away from the approaching train before it is near enough to cause much terror, and carefully alighting, take hold of the near rein with the right hand, and turn his face gradually round to the object of his fears, soothing him with a kindly tone of the voice; and, rubbing his face with the left hand, let him stand to watch the fast receding train fairly out of sight. As these railway arches are most frequently in the country, where there is plenty of room, this may be done without inconvenience.

A shying horse will take less notice of a train passing on railways over streets in large towns, because the noise and surrounding objects render this particular one more indistinct, and less to be dreaded. Whipping and spurring, under these circumstances, would probably end in serious mischief. Many horses shy on a country road at such insignificant objects, which they would not notice in a crowded street, because they stand out in relief, and are more prominent than anything else, whereas in a busy street the horse's attention is more divided and familiarised to the sight of a large object from its being surrounded by smaller ones. A horse will also pass through a large crowd, when some difficulty would be experienced in coaxing him to face a small knot of persons in the middle of a country highway.

When colts are first ridden or driven on the road, great patience should be exercised, and they should be encouraged to look at every object as much as possible, stopping frequently for that purpose, and caressing them; some of the more timid will turn suddenly round, and then is the time to make or mar them, for if handled roughly and punished at this period of their training, great difficulty will be experienced, both then and ever after, in riding or driving them, and especially past this particular spot or object. But by light handling and kind treatment, and turning their face gradually in the direction of the dreaded object, and letting them stand to thoroughly examine it before they approach, the rider will, by the exercise of a little patience, finally succeed in bringing their noses close up to it.

The rider or driver should always feel friendly disposed towards a timid horse, and, above all things, avoid a quarrel with him, though, at the same time, he should be firm and decided in exacting from the colt a ready obedience to his wishes, after he is convinced that these wishes are properly understood, by the application of the proper aids or signals; but this may be effected without fighting with him—which, I may say, is the common remedy: for instance, if a horse or colt suddenly turn round, as above described, he may be prevented from proceeding in a contrary direction without the application of whip or spur, for these instruments of torture should never be applied, except in cases of confirmed vice or wilful disobedience, which is rarely practised by a colt, and the really good horseman can always distinguish vice from timidity, even the first time of riding the animal.

Nothing is so common with persons who are ignorant of a horse's nature, and destitute of common sense or feeling (providing they have the power to sit a horse), as when he turns round from fear, to commence shaking their arms, head, and shoulders about, and exclaim, "Oh, that's your game, is it?" or some such expression, and dashing their spurs into his quivering flanks, challenge him at once to a pitched battle, forcing him up to or past the object, which, to the trembling colt, may appear like a mountain ready to fall upon and crush him; and these "horse-roughs" then take credit for conquering the brute's temper, as they call it, notwithstanding that he may be as harmless as a child.

Ladies or gentlemen who are nervous or indifferent riders, and whose horses are subject to the disagreeable infirmity of shying, would do well to keep them in regular exercise, and when inconvenient for themselves to ride, a patient and sensible groom should be employed to exercise them for at least two hours every day, on the same road they are usually ridden by their owners. But in training colts, a variety of routes should be taken, so as to allow them to see fresh objects every day, until thoroughly accustomed to most things—animate and inanimate—with which it is likely they may hereafter come in contact. There are few high-couraged horses that do not shy more or less after being kept in the stables a day or two without exercise; some will enjoy themselves when set at liberty by capering about like dogs when let loose from a kennel, because they have no other way of testifying their pleasure; and this, by inexperienced horsemen, is erroneously considered vice.

CHAPTER VIII.

BALLS AND DRENCHES.

Every man who keeps a horse should know how to administer a ball, it being both inconvenient and expensive to employ a veterinary surgeon every time a horse requires an alterative. There are some horses that are most difficult to manage during the administering of a ball; these require the assistance of a V.S., or a very experienced hand, but the majority of horses will take them from any man who will take the trouble to follow the instructions given in this article.

The horse should be turned heads about in his stall, with his croup against the manger or corner of his box, to prevent him from running back, the operator speaking kindly to him, and handling him lightly about the head and ears, to establish confidence between them, after which he will gently open the horse's mouth, and, having his shirt sleeves turned up, take hold of the horse's tongue with the left hand, being careful not to press upon it with his nails; he will draw it out on the right side, and hold it firmly in the hand, and having the ball ready in his right hand, he will pass it over the tongue to the top of the gullet, and withdraw the hand as quickly as possible; the operator should keep the back of his hand as near the roof of the horse's mouth as possible, and the ball should be held between the thumb and three fingers The moment the right hand is withdrawn from the mouth, the left hand should quit the tongue, and the horse will generally swallow the ball, which the operator will be assured of by watching the outside of the gullet.

It is a common, but a very reprehensible practice, to buy and keep balls long before they are used, as they often become so dry and hard as to be insoluble in the stomach, and pass through the intestines unchanged. But the most serious inconvenience which arises from giving balls that have been kept until they become hard, is that they are liable to stick in the gullet, and thereby endanger the horse's life. In holding the tongue with the left hand while the ball is given, great care is required with horses that are restive, as the rough and violent manner in which this is sometimes done, injures the tongue on the under part of it. After giving a ball some persons will pinch or press the windpipe, as they say, "For the purpose of making him swallow it;" but this is a bad practice, as it is apt to cause the horse to cough, by which swallowing is prevented. The only thing necessary, after the hand is withdrawn, is to keep the mouth shut, and press the nose downwards, in a moderate degree, towards the chest.

With some horses it is necessary to use a balling-iron, an instrument formed to keep the mouth open while the ball is introduced; it also answers the purpose of saving the operator's hand from injury by the horse's teeth.

Drenching is a rather more inconvenient method of physicing horses, but is far more beneficial in some cases, gripes for instance, which is a very common disorder among horses; and where the symptoms are alarming, a proper drench will relieve the animal at once, when a ball would be useless, from the length of time it requires to operate.

The best and most frequently used instrument for giving a drench is the horn of an ox, the opening being cut obliquely in the form of a spout.

Bottles are sometimes used to give drenches, but they are attended with danger, and should be handled with caution, as if, in the struggle that takes place with some horses, the tongue should slip through the hand, the horse's jaws are closed upon the neck of the bottle, and is is probably broken, when, not only a serious injury to the mouth is caused, but it will be an extremely difficult operation to drench or ball the horse ever after.

In administering a drench, the horse's tongue should be held in the left hand, and when the head is a little elevated the medicine is to be carefully poured down the throat, immediately letting go the tongue, keeping the head up until the drench is swallowed. There are few persons that can give a drench properly, and a great part of the medicine is consequently wasted. The horse's head is generally kept too high, which, with the rubbing of the throat, as practised by many operators, will cause the horse to cough while in the act of swallowing. Drenches should always be given with as much gentleness as possible; soothing the horse with the hand about the face and muzzle, and talking to him a few minutes before operating, will have the effect of allaying the fears of nervous horses. It is not necessary to have more persons in the stable with the operator than a boy to hold the jug containing the medicine, as a lot of lookers-on only alarm the horse with their noise and movements. The horn may generally be introduced into the horse's mouth by merely pressing down the tongue with the fingers of the left hand, and the thumb placed under the jaw, instead of dragging it out of the mouth, as is commonly done. A small quantity of the liquid only should be given at once, and if at any time a horse happens to cough, or appears distressed while being drenched, his head should be immediately let down.

Corns are the most common and troublesome, if not the most painful affliction with which the feet of the horse are visited, and, like corns in the feet of the human being, are mostly produced by bad-fitting shoes, though, I believe that, like many diseases, they are frequently transmitted by descent, for I have known colts afflicted with corns before they have been shod; still, it may be fairly surmised, that in the majority of cases they proceed from bad shoeing. They often produce serious lameness, and not unfrequently mislead even experienced persons, and deceive them as to the cause or seat of lameness.

I have known instances where horses have been blistered and turned out for shoulder lameness, when the true cause has been corns—they are most frequently found in white feet with low heels—but they are too often found more or less in all sorts of feet, though not so prevalent as formerly, owing to the great improvements made in shoeing. They are caused, in many cases, by the unequal pressure of the shoe, the heel bearing on the thin sole, and consequently bruising the sensible sole, and thus rupturing the blood vessels; the blood then finds its way into the pores of the horn, and causes the dark red and inflamed appearance, which is visible on removing the shoe and paring the dirty surface of the sole. This part is very tender, and any undue pressure upon it causes the most excruciating pain to the poor animal.

Cart and coach horses are very subject to corns, owing to the prevailing practice of owners having them shod by contract—a very false economy, for horses that are shod by contract are rarely well shod; no part of the horse requires so much attention as his feet; if they be unsound from corns or from any disease, the horse will be of very little value, and unsafe to ride or drive. When a horse is afflicted with corns in one foot, and some time has elapsed since they have been pared out, his lameness will at once be apparent on trotting him slowly on a Macadamised road; but if he be suffering from corns in both fore-feet, the lameness will not be so perceptible, though the experienced eye will have little difficulty in detecting their existence by the shuffling gait and an evident fear in putting down his feet with that vigour and firmness exhibited by a horse with thoroughly sound feet; both feet being alike afflicted, the tyro in horse-flesh will not observe the decided lameness which really exists.

With the knowledge of this result unprincipled copers insert pebbles or beans between the shoe and sole of a sound foot, to disguise the lameness in the other. All doubt may, however, be removed by having the fore-shoes taken off and the sole pared, when the red appearance, above described, will at once be seen on the sole. The hoofs of a horse suffering from corns will be unnaturally hot, and a slight tap upon them or the sole with a hammer or stone will cause the horse to flinch as if suffering intense agony. I have rarely known this troublesome disorder completely cured; but great relief to the horse, and consequent convenience to the owner, results from cutting down the crust, bar, and sole, and applying a bar shoe, to take off the pressure on the afflicted part; and when unnatural heat exists in the feet they should be kept cool and moist while standing in the stable with wet cloths round the hoof and coronet—woollen or linen—several times folded, and kept wet by frequently pouring water upon them.

When corns are neglected the horse suffers the most intense pain, and soon becomes useless. I have seen matter formed and oozing from the coronet. In these cases the pain is considerably relieved by cooling medicine, green food, or bran mashes, taking off the shoes, and poulticing the feet; when it is perceived that the inflammation and heat have abated, and the sole softened, the horn may be cut away until the seat of disease is laid bare, and the part dressed with Friar's Balsam and tar ointment; a run at grass will be very beneficial to a horse suffering from corns, but his shoes must be taken off, and he should frequently be taken up, and his feet pared down and dressed with tar ointment by an experienced farrier. It is considered almost impossible to completely eradicate corns; but if taken in the early stage they may be entirely removed, though the feet should be carefully watched, as it is probable they may re-appear at some period of the horse's life. A horse suffering from corns is considered to be unsound.

CHAPTER IX.

RUNAWAY HORSES.

INEXPERIENCED persons often meet with accidents by horses running away, and it is very common to hear them attribute it to the horse "taking fright;" but in most cases it will be found to have originated with themselves.

One reason of this infirmity (often considered a vice) is the sudden breaking of some portion of the harness or vehicle, during the process of training, or at some other period, which thus creates nervousness for the rest of their lives; and likewise, when the horses experience a feel of anything on their hind quarters, which they cannot fully comprehend, when they either commence to kick, or gallop away. It is true that there are a few horses where the nervousness is transmitted by descent, and although this can never be thoroughly eradicated, yet much may be done, by way of amelioration, with care and kindness.

I have known saddle horses, in the hands of some persons, taught to gallop on the hard road, every time they have a clear course or a favourable bit of ground, and their desire for the horse to start is mostly conveyed to him by some signal peculiar to themselves, but nevertheless quite easy to be accidentally practised by others; such, for instance, as the clicking of the tongue, the sudden application of the heels, leaning the body forward, whipping suddenly on some particular part of the body, &c., until the horse requires a habit of galloping away at anything bearing a resemblance to these signals, in the hands of other riders.

But the prevailing cause is the riding of high-couraged, fidgetty, light-mouthed horses by inexperienced persons. This kind of animal requires a firm seat and steady hand, which, I need not remark, cannot be practised except by an experienced horseman or woman; and if proper discretion be not exercised in handling them, it causes a jigging style, or unsteadiness in their going, more especially in company with horses of a similar temperament; and, when ridden with a loose, unsteady seat, a sharp curb bridle, or a harassing, uneven hand, it increases as the horse gets warmer, and gradually feels his power over the rider; and at last his impatience overcomes the rider's ability to manage him. From the fretful prancing he bounces into an uneven canter, and the now nervous and helpless rider despairingly clutches at the reins, and commences a strong, steady, dead pull with both hands, which prevents him from guiding the horse, who now gets the bit between his teeth, and fixing his head and neck upon it for support, the rider's control over him is lost. He might as well pull at a monument, for the horse gallops away, and carries him wherever he pleases. Very bad riders draw their heels up into the horse's sides to assist them in keeping their seat, and frequently hold on by them alone, with an occasional grab at the pommel of the saddle. This pressure of the heels is the signal for a well-broken horse to increase his speed, and of course they fancy they are doing right, and gallop on until exhausted, or some accident occurs.

The prevailing remedy for runaway horses, is to let them gallop until they commence to slacken their pace, and then to apply the whip and spur severely, to make them hold on still longer. This is not only cruel, but will sometimes cause a rupture of the cells in the lungs, and thereby a permanent injury to the wind, especially to horses which carry a superfluity of flesh; and it is a folly to suppose that this will deter the horse from repeating the practice when he feels so inclined.

A complete answer to this absurd theory is given in the case of race-horses, who frequently gallop until partially exhausted when nearing the winning post, and are then flogged and spurred in a style and manner which none but an experienced jockey can equal; and still the horses are as impatient to start for the second heat or race as the first, even though it be only an hour after they have been urged, by punishment, to finish the first heat contrary to their will.

The owners of these runaway horses are often at a great expense in procuring severe bits, nose bands (to compress the nostrils), &c., which are being continually invented, advertised as new discoveries, and eventually thrown aside as useless. Every week we notice reports of accidents, (some ending fatally) that are as frequent as ever, and although some of these bits may answer the purpose for which they are invented, when properly applied, they are useless in the hands of the timid inexperienced horseman; and perhaps the best advice to these would be for them never to mount any horse which they may have a doubt as to their being able to manage. But, to those who disregard this advice, or by accident find themselves on the back of a horse that has commenced to run away, I may say the best plan is to sit as still as possible. A horse is as easy to sit at a fast smooth gallop as at a simple trot, and the rider may coolly and without hurry separate the reins, taking one in each hand, and, short hold, grasping the hands firmly to prevent them from slipping upwards, and in place of a dead, steady pull, he should commence a sawing movement on the horse's mouth, by pulling alternately, first with right hand, and then with left, which will effectually prevent the horse keeping the bit between his teeth. If the reader will .make an experiment on his own mouth, with a piece of twine, he will at once perceive the force of my remarks.

I always find a twisted snaffle bit preferable to a curb bridle to stop the course of a runaway horse, which, by the by, seldom occurs with me, and I rarely hear of a horse running away with a thoroughly experienced horseman, except through some circumstance where their ability becomes neutralised, and over which they have no control, as I believe any man who is well accustomed to horse exercise may, by the means above described, pull any horse together when he is on his back. The danger is much greater when horses run away in harness, as the driver cannot have so much power over them, being further away from his work, but still the sawing method and keeping his seat is his only chance of safety.

It may happen that when a horse runs away in saddle he will have on a double bridle, consisting of curb bit and snaffle, in which case the best way is to use the snaffle in the manner above described. Keeping the curb rein loosely in the hands—and in some instances the horse may be stopped by suddenly picking up the curb rein (after allowing him to pursue his course without the least restraint a short time), and the application of which, by a severe jerk, or a succession of distinct jerks, will cause him to stop much sooner than a dead pull, as the strength of a horse's jaw is capable of resisting the efforts of the strongest man, as applied in this manner; but the pain and resistance which he has to encounter by the sawing or "curb jerk" will, when properly applied, pull him together and prevent accidents.

In cases where the rider fails to restrain the runaway horse, and a *collision* with some formidable object appears inevitable, it is perhaps the best way to jump off, as the *least* of the *two* evils. By remaining in the saddle, in some instances, almost certain death stares the rider in the face; whereas, with proper precaution, he may escape without injury. But let all who attempt this course be exceedingly careful to clear the stirrups and every part of the dress from the saddle. Smart, active, young men, may have little difficulty in clearing a horse, while galloping, by taking hold of the cantle (hind part) of the saddle with the *left*-hand—first taking the reins in the *right*-hand—and then bring the right leg to the near side, over the neck, and *under* the *right* hand. Then place the ball of the right hand (first quitting the reins) on the pommel (fore part) of the saddle, and by making a purchase of the two hands he will now sit on the saddle, as on a chair, with his face to the left, and his feet close together. Being quite clear from the stirrups, he may now spring in an oblique direction to the left front of the horse, thus, as it were, going with him, until he drops on his legs uninjured, except a little shaking. But, where the *inexperienced* rider is afraid to lose his balance, or to bring over his right leg, in the manner described, to the left side (although there is no danger, if he will grasp the cantle of the saddle, as a purchase), he may dismount by the ordinary method, with greater precaution. First, by *withdrawing both* his feet from the stirrups before he attempts to bring the right leg over the *cantle* of the saddle, he will *retain* the reins in his left hand, which he will firmly place on the pommel of the saddle for a support; and pressing the inside of the left leg firmly to the skirt of the saddle, he will now bring the right leg over the cantle, and at the same moment place his right hand firmly on the cantle of the saddle. His feet will now be together, and his knees pressing to the horse's side. He will now take care that his left hand is quite clear from the reins, and making a purchase of both hands, watch for a favourable opportunity, spring with his feet close together to the left front of the horse, and it is more than probable he will drop on his legs in safety.

But let me impress upon his mind that great care should be exercised in the practice of this theory. Every movement should be made distinctly and independent of another, as any mistake (especially in not clearing the stirrups) might be attended with accidents as disastrous in their effects as remaining in the saddle, to be dashed against an omnibus, through a shop window, or over a precipice; and above all things, endeavour to be cool and collected, and stare the danger boldly in the face. Hurry and bustle only increase the danger, and render the rider incapable of making a proper effort to save himself.

The jumping-off alternative is only recommended to be adopted where a serious accident appears inevitable; but where there is plenty of room, in a field or on a good road, and the rider cannot stop the horse, it is the best plan to let him gallop on until he stops of his own accord, first trying to pull him round on one side, which will sometimes stop him; but this is dangerous unless there be plenty of room or a quickset hedge, which will either stop him or cause him to jump into the field; and, whether the rider be sent into the hedge, or loses his seat in the leap, or they stick together and continue their course in the fields, it is better than letting him keep his course on the hard road, and run the chance of coming into collision with carts or waggons, or (if it be night) a closed toll-gate. Ladies chiefly commence to scream when in this dilemma. The folly of this course is obvious; it only serves to increase the speed of the horse, and is sufficient of itself to cause a high-spirited, nervous horse to run away. I should recommend inexperienced persons (ladies or gentlemen), if they carry a whip, which may appear to fret the animal (the mere sight of a whip will very much irritate some horses), to leave it at home, give it to the groom in attendance, or even to throw it away, rather than get the horse into an ungovernable state of frenzy by continuing to keep it in the hand. This, if done in time, will often reconcile a hot-tempered, dancing, high-couraged horse, and better, of course, lose whip than life.

In conclusion, I repeat my conviction that it is much better for aged people or inexperienced persons, of either sex, to walk rather than persist in riding horses which they are uncertain as to their ability to control.

CHAPTER X.

OUR CAVALRY HORSES.

VERY many of our troop-horses are unable to carry fourteen stone of weight, even at home, although they are well fed and exposed to no privations; therefore, we need not be surprised when they are campaigning, and subjected to great privations, that they should break down under an average weight of about eighteen stone—the weight of the dragoon and his full equipment on active service.

The horses of the household cavalry are considered the best in the British army; but there are great numbers even among them that would be quite unequal to the weight they would have to carry if they were on active service—having, for the most part, weak loins, and being deficient in many qualities essential for carrying weight. The incapacity of our cavalry horses to carry much weight, is of very little consequence while peace continues, but in the event of war a large portion of our dragoons would be dismounted after a month's active service, thus increasing the demand for useful horses, always consequent on war, which would be met, as was the case during the Russian war, with an unsatisfactory response.

For many years past a large portion of our troop horses have been purchased in Ireland, but the supply there has greatly declined, owing to very many farmers, who were breeders of horses, having emigrated. Then it cannot be denied by men who visit the Irish fairs and breeding districts that the former supply of short-legged useful saddle-horses has been supplanted by a more leggy kind of animal, the result of the prevailing fashion of crossing with weak-constitutioned racehorses. Whatever may be said in favour of our racing blood, I cannot but think that Arab blood, when crossed with young, sound, and strong Cleveland brood mares, would produce a more serviceable animal than our soldiers ride at present, for then we should get endurance and constitutional vigour (undeteriorated by "in and in breeding") from the sire, and strength of bone and muscle from the dam.

I am aware that there are conflicting opinions as to the merits of Arab horses; some say they are worthless, and others affirm that they are excellent.

It must be admitted, that most of the Arab horses which have of late years been brought into this country have not been of the first-class, being purchased on the coasts of certain eastern countries by persons having little acquaintance with the make and shape of a serviceable horse, and lacking the means and opportunity of seeking them where they are only to be found, and at high prices—namely, the heart of the desert. Still, an Arab horse does now and then arrive in this country, having much merit; and in breeding from which, very good stock have been obtained for every purpose, except that of competing on the turf with the speed of our present race-horses.

The Arabian horses cannot gallop fast for a long distance but at a hand-gallop; and under a burning sun, their endurance would scarcely be believed, and their value in the desert is regulated chiefly in consideration of the distance they can travel at that pace, without being attacked by staggers, under a burning sun. But I am afraid the high prices, and the difficulty of procuring them in sufficient numbers, will be an insuperable bar to their general introduction into this country for crossing purposes. The French government, some years ago, established several depots for the best stallions they could select in the Sahara district, and to these depots the farmers send their mares; and as it is known that the quality of their horses is improving under the system, would it not be advisable for our government at least to make an experiment of this system? and if it was found to answer, they could send over men quite as competent, if not more so, than the French, to buy the best that could be found.

One of the great objections to Arab horses in this country is that they trip in their walk. All, however, who have ridden them will admit that they do not trip in their other paces. The reason of their tripping in their walk, is their being tied, from a very early age, by their fore-feet, instead of by their head, in consequence of which they contract a habit of stepping short in their walk; and though they do not trip, their trot is far from being so agreeable and perfect as that of the English horse, being a kind of running, shuffling gait. But I believe, if they were bred here, and not subjected to the leg-tying tether, that their paces would be as perfect, and as agreeable, as those of our own horses, more especially when we take into consideration the high-stepping qualities which they would (by crossing, as above recommended,) inherit from their dams, and the advantages which they would derive from the difference in our manner of breaking them in. Whenever competent judges go into the heart of the Desert, prepared to give high prices, they will obtain valuable horses; but they must not object to those which are of low stature, as many who are prejudiced against Arab horses do, forgetting what they ought to remember, that when our system of feeding is applied to small, but vigorous Arabs, the progeny obtained from them will, like that obtained from their predecessors on our turf, be only too much disposed to acquire a high stature. The stature of many of our early race-horses did not exceed fourteen hands, while that of our present ones is rarely less than fifteen and a half hands, many sixteen hands and more.

We could not, under any system of breeding, expect to produce horses capable of carrying our soldiers in complete marching order, and having the agreeable action and high breeding of horses that are only bred with a view to speed alone, under very light weights.

But when once able to produce a great number of saddle-horses, by crossing good Arab blood with strength of bone and muscle, we should soon have a race of hardy and vigorous horses fit to carry our light cavalry. Then, by the aid of a cross with a lower but stronger breed of horses, we could produce the finest heavy cavalry horses in the whole world, with strength sufficient to charge and crash up the solid squares of an enemy into splinters; and having sufficient constitutional vigour to live and carry their riders, while existing upon such forage as the uncertain circumstances of camp life will allow.

Notwithstanding the general outcry that English-bred horses have become deteriorated in quality, it is a fact that most European sovereigns depend upon us for their very best chargers and pleasure-horses; many of them having agents in this country, who are always prepared to give fabulous prices for horses of the first water, and several London dealers have standing commissions to supply animals of this class. The great north of England dealer, Mr. Murray, of Manchester, has for years enjoyed the patronage of the Emperor of the French; and I know for a certainty, that the Empress Eugenie's most favourite horse was supplied by Mr. Murray. The Emperor's first charger at the present time was also purchased, with eight others, from Mr. Murray, by General Fleury, on the 9th April last, all for the Emperor's own use. And, by-the-bye, I may here mention, that as a mark of the satisfaction which these purchases have given his Imperial Majesty, he has recently presented Mr. Murray with a massive gold snuff-box, studded with fifty-seven brilliants.

Prince Napoleon has on more than one occasion visited Mr. Murray's establishment, and ridden horses in his trial ground, purchasing, and giving his own cheque in payment before the delivery of the horses. Mr. Murray has also had the honour of supplying the late Emperor of Russia, as well as the present Emperor Alexander, with horses. The Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia are also amongst his patrons. Many wealthy gentlemen of Paris and Lyons regularly purchase horses from this establishment, amongst whom may be named M. Hartmaun of the latter place, and M. Vogel of the former.

During the last twelve months, numbers of high-class horses have also been exported from Mr. Murray's establishment to Amsterdam, Sardinia, and various parts of the continent of Europe, as also to Port Natal. Great numbers of horses are also purchased by foreigners from the London dealers, including Mr. Philips, Mr. Josh. Anderson (now Messrs. T. and G. Rice, Mr. Anderson having retired), Messrs. Quartermaine, Cox, Sewell, Cotterill, Pearl, and the Messrs. Blackman, of Kensington; in short, I may say that English-bred horses are now all the fashion on the Continent; and when it is taken into consideration that they give enormous prices, we need scarcely wonder that high-class horses are both dear and scarce at home. It may naturally be asked, how these dealers manage to get hold of such first-class animals? But the question is soon answered by the fact, that they are in regular communication with the best horse-breeders in the United Kingdom, men who breed especially with a view of producing quality, substance, and symmetry, always having regard to constitutional soundness; the weeds are carefully withdrawn, and drafted into the second and third class, to be sold to second and third-rate customers, who will not, or cannot afford to give a first-rate price, and who are always grumbling about the scarcity of good horses.

There are many foreign emperors, kings, queens, and empresses, field-marshals, generals, and wealthy civilians, whose chief delight is the beauty and quality of their horses; and if they once take a fancy to a particular horse, price is no object to them. We have many noblemen and gentlemen of the right sort in our own little isle, who never make the price a barrier for a really clever "Bank of England animal," the majority of whom are known to the "number one" dealers, who have only to drop a line when they meet with a suitable horse to carry the duke, the marquis, his lordship, or plain Mr. Tally-ho, with his ruddy cheeks, grey whiskers, stuck-up shirt collar, blue bird's-eye neckerchief, and blue coat with plain metal buttons, whom every first-class horse-dealer numbers among his aristocratic customers; these know the value of a horse when they see one at a single glance, because they never ride anything else but the best horses that money can purchase.

Such customers as these are never seen to enter a dealer's yard with a troop of friends (would-be connoisseurs in horse-flesh) at their heels, to prevent them from being cheated, but every one of this class of purchasers has a different opinion about a horse when submitted to his inspection. It is useless showing them a high-priced and really valuable animal, for they would leave the yard in disgust, with an idea that the dealer was trying to impose upon them. But experienced horse-dealers are excellent judges of human nature and physiognomy; they can tell almost instantly they see a man whether he is a buyer, or a judge of horses, and how much he will give to a few pounds.

There is no class men in the community whose patience and honour are so severely tested as horsedealers. Those customers are generally the most afraid of being cheated who are the most ignorant of the real value of a horse, and the trouble they give so far outweighs the fair legitimate profit to which a dealer is entitled, that it becomes almost necessary to overcharge them a little, by way of compensation for the superfluous annoyance which they give in the deal; and sometimes, in self-defence, as a kind of assurance in the event of their returning the horse when put out of conceit of him by a clever friend, or by an ignorant, conceited groom, who, taking advantage of his master's ignorance, is sure to lower the condition of the horse, or perhaps injure him so much as to make out a case of breach of warranty, if the dealer does not allow him a bribe (under the term of "tip"), amounting in many cases of itself to a fair profit, when sold to a customer, who knows what he wants when he enters a dealer's yard, or being ignorant, does not hesitate to avow it, and trusts to the honour and superior judgment of the dealer to select him a horse in every way suitable for his requirements; for I repeat what I have often before stated, that it does not pay a respectable horse-dealer to cheat his customers; and if a purchaser would place entire confidence in the dealer, he will rarely find the confidence abused. But those who treat a respectable dealer with unjust suspicions, need not be surprised, when left to select for themselves, if they look for one sort of horse and find another.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHARACTER OF THE HORSE.

There may be some among my readers who will be surprised to learn that the horse breathes through his nostrils only, and not through his mouth, and this accounts for the fact that the mouth is rarely seen open, except through the pressure of the bit on his lower jaw. This is the cause of the dilation of his nostrils during and after severe exercise. When grazing in the fields, he gathers the blades of grass with his lips, by which they are passed between his incisors, or front teeth, and these front teeth are used for a two-fold purpose, that of holding and cropping the herbage, the latter operation being assisted by a sharp twitch of the head. The ox or cow, on the contrary, use the tongue to gather their food, that organ being so employed as to encircle a small tuft of grass, which is placed by it between the incisors and an elastic pad opposite to them in the upper jaw; between these the herbage is pressed, and partly cut, its complete severance being effected by tearing.

The sheep gathers its food in a similar manner to the horse, and is enabled to bring its cutting teeth much nearer to the roots of the plants, in consequence of the upper lip being partially cleft—a wise provision of Nature. When prostrate on the ground, in getting up the horse rises first on his fore-legs, and completes the operation by raising his hind-quarters. The ox, on the other hand, rises first on his hind-legs, then remains a short time on his knees, until his hind-legs are straightened, and the raising of his fore-hand completes the standing position.

I have heard it asserted by many horsemen, that in his wild state the horse has no intermediate pace between a walk and a gallop. It has never been my lot to see a herd of wild horses, but I have seen herds of wild ponies in Wales and Exmoor Forest, as also troops of colts and fillies that have never been haltered, and I can affirm that I have noticed many of them indulge in a fair round trot, bending their knees and setting their feet down as true as a well-broken horse. It is also a common but erroneous opinion that the broken horse when walking or trotting lifts simultaneously the off fore-leg and the near hind one, or *vice versa.* It is a difficult matter to keep the eye upon four legs at once, but if the tyro will carefully observe the horse when he is going at a slow pace, it will be seen that if one foot is raised from the ground the other three are on the ground, though all are prepared to leave it in their turn, it will be evident that this process is carried out in his quicker motions. In some movements the two fore-legs are raised together, while the two hind ones are on the ground, and the latter are raised together when the former are put down, and so on successively; and in cantering both pairs of legs are often raised from the ground at each strike the animal gives to the surface.

There is as much difference in the tempers, disposition, and intelligence of horses as in human beings; a good horseman can instantly tell the disposition of a horse at first sight, by the eyes and motion of the ears. Small, rather than large ears, placed not too far apart, erect and quick in their motion, indicate both spirit, breeding, and intelligence; and if a horse is in the frequent habit of carrying one ear forward and the other backward, especially on a journey, I have always found him enduring. The stretching of the ears in contrary directions also shows that he is attentive to everything that is passing around him, and while he is doing this he cannot be much fatigued, nor likely soon to become so; few horses sleep without pointing one ear forward and the other backward.

The temper of a horse is more surely indicated by the ear than by the eye, and an experienced observer can tell by the motion of the ears most of what they think and mean to do. When the horse lays his ears back flat upon his neck, and keeps them so, he most assuredly means mischief, and the bystanders should be aware of his heels or his teeth. In play the ears will also be laid back, but not so decidedly, nor so long, and a quick change in their position, together with the expression of the eye at the time, will distinguish the difference between playfulness and vice. The hearing of the horse is much more acute than that of a human being. It is well known to hunting men that a cry of hounds will be heard by the horse, and his ears will be erect, he will champ the bit and be all spirit and impatience before the rider is conscious of the least sound. The eye of the horse is also a pretty sure index of a horse's temper, and if much of the white is seen, and that restless and cast backwards, it may be suspected that he is dangerous, and it would be advisable either to go boldly up to his head and seize it, with the right hand on the halter close to his muzzle, or else keep out of the range of his heels, for the tyro may rest assured that the horse is slyly watching for opportunities to do mischief; the backward direction of the eye, when the white is most perceptible, is only to give sure effect to the blow which he is about to aim.

The horse is passionately fond of company, indeed many are so to a fault; for I have seen them refuse to proceed, when, after being ridden or driven by the side of another, their companion has been withdrawn. There are also many horses that appear almost frantic if overtaken and passed on the road by another, and would, if they were allowed, run away. I know an aged grey horse in particular, the property of Mr. Field, the eminent veterinary surgeon of Oxford Street, London, who, if passed on the road, it would be impossible to hold, except by a rein especially invented for the purpose, I believe, by Mr. Blackwell, saddler, of Oxford Street, and in which he is always driven for safety, although managed with a thread at any other time.

The horse is not only a bold and intrepid animal, but he also participates in the pleasures of his rider, as seen by the capering and almost frantic delight manifested before starting for a race, or at the breaking of a fox from cover in the hunting-field. But still he suffers himself to be repressed in his movements, and knows how to govern and how to check the natural vivacity and fire of his temper. He not only yields to the hand, but appears to consult the wishes of his rider, and regulates his motions entirely by his master's will; in short, he renounces his very existence to the pleasure of man, and often dies rather than disobey.

These are features in the character of the horse, the natural qualities of which have been perfected by art, and trained with care and patience to the service of mankind. His education commences with the loss of his liberty, and is completed by restraint; and when employed in labour he is confined under the weight of his rider, and restrained by a torturing bit, or strapped between the shafts of a carriage, and if he be a cart-horse his whole life is passed in chains, and even during the time destined for repose he is not always delivered from his bonds. And if permitted to roam in the pasture sometimes, he still bears the mark, in a more or less degree, of servitude, and often the external impressions of labour and pain; his mouth is deformed by the constant friction of the bit, his sides are galled with wounds, or furrowed with scars from trace, spur, or the degrading chains, and his hoofs are broken and deformed by nails and bad-fitting shoes, and the natural shape of his body and movement of his legs are deformed by the habitual pressure of the fetters which he wears, and from which man cannot afford to deliver him—more's the pity—but man can do much to alleviate his sufferings.

There are very many books written by veterinary surgeons and others regarding the numerous diseases to which horses are liable, some of which are directly opposed to others, as to the treatment prescribed for cure. But not being a veterinary surgeon myself, I do not intend to condemn or applaud any of these writers, some of whose productions, no doubt, are good, while others I know from experience to be the reverse. My object is to warn the tyro not to use any of the recipes given in veterinary works, unless he be able to form a correct opinion of the disease from which his horse may be suffering, as the medicine that would cure one disease or ailment might be very injurious, or perhaps kill the patient suffering from another. I would also warn the tyro not to listen to the host of *clever* men (in their own estimation) with which he is sure to be beset, when his horse is the least bit amiss, or he will most likely learn, when too late, that medicines are useless and dangerous when prescribed by men who are unable to form a correct opinion of the disease.

That disease in its various forms does, and no doubt ever will, more or less, spread its devastating influence among the horses of both this and other countries there cannot be any doubt; therefore, horse owners should look well to the cause of disease, as we are aware that there never was a disease without a cause, nor a cause without an effect. The causes are various, some of which we are unable to account for; but there are many, of which we are well convinced, and yet at the same time never take measures to remove them.

One great cause, which I cannot too much impress upon the mind of my tyro, is the manner in which our stables are built, as well as the manner in which they are conducted; and although I am well aware that a very laudable endeavour is now, and has been for a few years back, made by architects and builders to improve the dwellings of our horses, yet there are thousands of stables in the crowded streets and back slums of our large towns, that are little better, as regards the health and comfort of our horses, than the black-hole of Calcutta was to the poor unfortunates who so miserably perished there; indeed, I have seen many stables, where, if their inmates were not allowed intervals of fresh air during the time they are at work, they would die in the same ratio.

The stables to which I refer are situate under ground, cellar-stables as they are so called. These are the very worst places in which a horse can be placed, although many of those above ground are bad enough, the generality of them being so badly ventilated. And where this is the case, there must be disease in some form or other. There are stables in London where as many as sixty to seventy horses are crowded together, the stalls for each not being five feet wide. Some of these have boarded floors, on which the horses stand, and underneath which the manure, mire, and other filth are constantly accumulating, at the same time spreading their poisonous exhalations throughout the entire building. This, together with the perspiration and breath of so many animals congregated together, in an improperly ventilated building, must necessarily produce disease.

We will suppose one of these horses **has** been working in a cab for the greater part of the day, all this time breathing a pure air, or at least as pure as town air generally is, at a regular temperature, and in the evening he is brought into a stable where the temperature is nearly double what it should be: must this not be very injurious? But the horse is not merely experiencing the sudden change in the temperature, but he is entering a place where every breath of air taken into the lungs is depositing its poison in the blood, and gradually working its way through the system, until it becomes a mass of disease in the form of glanders, or farcy, for the former of which there is no certain cure known. The horse, in his natural state, is used to breathing a pure air; hence the cause of horses running at grass being so free from disease, compared with those which are constantly kept in the stable during the period allotted them for rest; but if we consider for one moment, we must be convinced of the injurious effects of an impure atmosphere. Very many of the cases of inflammation of the lungs and catarrh arise from the sudden change experienced on going from the stable to the open air. The horse takes cold, he appears chilled; his coat, which before was smooth and glossy, now stands on end; the blood is driven to the internal organs, the blood-vessels of which are unable to stand the sudden rush of blood, the lungs become congested, and if the proper remedies are not immediately applied, death is the result. Some horses may not be so severely affected, as a deal depends upon the constitution of animals, but a close, impure stable will sooner or later tell its tale upon the most hardy horses that ever were foaled. It is a bad and impolitic system to keep many horses in one stable, for, independent of the heat and impurities of the atmosphere caused by the breath and stench arising from the interstices of the pavement, which, however well the stable may be drained, will always, more or less, be emitted to taint the air; the animals will prevent each other from taking or enjoying their natural and often much-needed rest, as it is scarcely possible or probable that they will all lie down at the same time, and those who are standing often disturb those that are lying down. It is a very important but much neglected point, that horses should take their natural rest without being disturbed, as they do their work more cheerfully, and are kept in much better condition than when they are harassed all the night long by a peevish stable-kicker, of which there is almost sure to be one or two for every half-dozen horses in a stable.

By far the best plan of stabling horses is to have them in separate boxes, where it is impossible for them to annoy each other, and where they can stand in any position which may, from their particular infirmities or conformation, be most easy to them; they will also have room to lie down and stretch their weary limbs to their full extent, as we sometimes see them at grass, where they are, as it were, in a state of nature.

I have known many valuable horses kicked and injured when placed for the first time in a strange stable by the side of a stable kicker. There are some horses, when not feeding or lying down, are always upon the move with their heels or their teeth, just like some irritable human beings; they will neither rest themselves nor allow others. Therefore my tyro will do well (if he should keep his horses in stalls) to separate the quiet, dolesome, easy-disposed horses from the fidgetty ones; it will not only be his policy to do so, but an act of justice to his animals.

CHAPTER XII.

STREET DRIVING.

An experienced driver, with a good pair of eyes, may calculate pretty nearly what space will be sufficient to pass between two stationary objects; but in street driving he will unavoidably meet many vehicles piloted by reckless and inexperienced drivers, and unless he proceeds with extreme care, and allows them plenty of room to pass, a collision will be the inevitable consequence. The experienced whip is a cool, calculating, even-tempered individual, who will always make allowances for the want of skill in others; he has sharp ears, good eyes, and steady hands—in fact, he is, in every sense of the word, an artist, with plenty of common sense. Many people have an idea that Mr. So-and-So is a splendid driver, because he can rattle along a crowded street at the rate of ten miles an hour, and spin round the corner at the same pace, without ever collecting his horses in hand; and although they have never known him to cause an accident, it is, nevertheless, very erroneous to suppose him to be a skilful driver, for he is quite the reverse; and notwithstanding that he may have escaped accidents hitherto, it is no guarantee that he should henceforth be so fortunate, and he is not indebted so much to his own skill, as to the skill and forbearance of others who are able to keep out of his way, and take care of themselves and their vehicles at the same time. Were it not for experienced, careful drivers, the more reckless would not be able to travel one hundred yards in crowded thoroughfares without an accident, and yet this class of driver is the most insolent and impatient, just as if his time were of more value than that of anyone else. Every really clever whip has both the power and the will to make way for, and thus assist, a quiet, inexperienced driver, or a lady when in a crowded part. But a reckless driver is invariably a badly-disposed and selfish man, because he will give way to nobody, but expect every one to give way to him; and this he generally ensures by the pace at which he drives, just by the same rule that people rush out of the way of a mad bull when running loose in the streets.

Perhaps the greatest nuisance to be found in the street traffic of London is the slovenly and reckless manner in which the railway lurries and coal waggons are driven, by men who sit on a box in front for that purpose. I have seen many letters in the London daily papers strongly censuring these men for their careless driving, and not without reason. But there is this to be said as an excuse for them, they are mostly uneducated men, and cannot be expected to display so much etiquette in street driving as their more refined, but equally reckless brethren, who pilot lighter and more fashionable vehicles. In fact, were it not for their insolence, at times, when defending a flagrant case of crossing out of their turn, the experienced hand would have no objection to excuse them altogether; for he will take into consideration that their horses are not naturally so active, nor can they be with a heavy load at their quarters, as a high-bred, short-stepping animal, attached to a feather weight in comparison to theirs.

Still, I am decidedly of opinion, that some of these lurry-men drive much too fast through the crowded thoroughfares of London, and they rely more upon the weight of their waggons than their own hands to clear them a passage, besides risking the lives and limbs of foot passengers at a crossing.

There are no men who rise from their beds every morning under a greater load of responsibility than the London omnibus drivers, and no class of men to whom more credit is due. For neither by the dear old stage-coach, nor the modern railway conveyance, are so many passengers daily conveyed, with so few accidents, as by the London omnibuses; and, notwithstanding the ground they daily traverse is literally swarming with every description of traffic, including perambulators full of young hopefuls, in the middle of a crossing, and the nursemaid staring about like a duck in a thunder-shower, as if being unable to make up her mind whether to retire or advance; gouty old gents, and fastidious old maids, in the same predicament, come to a dead halt just under the horses' heads; beggars, and a description of people who would as soon be run over as not, if they were certain of compensation for any injuries they incur the risk of receiving.

But although surrounded by these difficulties, in the way of his free progression, the steady artistic 'bus driver continues to steer comparatively clear of misfortunes, because he always keeps his horses collected in hand, his eyes are always intent upon his business, and the objects in front of his vehicle. It is true that accidents do sometimes unavoidably occur, but they are rarely caused by circumstances over which the omnibus driver has any control.

Still, these men labour under greater disadvantages, in respect to the cattle they drive, than the average of street drivers, or gentlemen's coachmen; for the latter have, generally, a more intimate knowledge of their horses' tempers and mouths, before they are required to drive them in crowded streets; but the 'bus driver is often required to take a horse in hand which the proprietors have just purchased from a gentleman, whose coachman could not manage him in the carriage, but the 'bus driver has to pilot him by the side of another, with none the best of tempers, and surrounded by nervous, fidgetty passengers, having to conduct the lot through dangerous thoroughfares, as above described, safely to their destination, and often required by thoughtless passengers to stop with a heavy load in the middle of a hill, to a few inches, so that their feet may not be damped by a few yards' walking to the exact spot they wish to arrive at.

In a dilemma of this nature a fast and reckless driver, with his flourishing whip, harassing hands, and selfish disposition, would speedily find himself before his betters, to answer for the cracking of some poor wight's limbs, or reducing a two-hundred guinea equipage into lucifer-match wood.

CHAPTER XIII.

TREATMENT OF MARES WITH FOAL.

THE usual period of gestation in the mare is from forty-eight to fifty-two weeks, but she sometimes varies from forty-six to fifty-four weeks. Some writers have asserted that the mare goes with foal eleven months and as many days as she is years old; others that she goes eleven months with a mare, and twelve months with a horse colt; but there is no dependence to be placed in such rules. In some instances I have known mares to foal horse colts in ten months and two weeks, and in others to go a year and upwards, and yet bring forth mare colts; one year, a mare to foal in eleven months, and the succeeding year the same mare to go three weeks longer, and in both cases had fillies. Out of a record of eighty mares kept in one season, the average period of gestation was eleven months and one week; of these there were forty horse colts, and the same number of fillies; the horse colts averaging one day the longest, which was caused by one very old mare going over a year. These facts prove the fallacy of such predictions.

After your mare has been put to the horse of your choice, she should not be confined too closely during her pregnancy. A run to grass four or five months would be highly advantageous. But if her services are needed either for agricultural or other purposes, she may be kept at moderate work from the time of connection up to the period of foaling, not only without injury, but with decided advantage. Moderate exercise is essential to the production of healthy offspring. When half the period of pregnancy has expired, she should be more generously fed, as by this time the fœtus will be making greater demands on her for sustenance, and she should therefore be allowed one, two, or three feeds of grain a day, according to her condition and the amount of labour required to perform. This is also the period when abortion is most likely to occur. The mare is in danger of slinking her foal from foul blows, over-exertion, the use of musty hay or grain, and offensive objects of smell or sight of any kind. Good feeling and careful exercise are the best preventives of this misfortune. The mare should not be let out or exposed to cold wind and storms, and at night she should be placed in a wide stall or loose box, well littered with clean straw, affording her a good bed, which will add much to her thrift and comfort; she should also be curried and rubbed down, if worked, at least once a day.

When the mare is near foaling, she should be by herself, either in a small lot or good roomy stable, under the frequent inspection of her owner or some careful person. The approach of parturition is indicated by the formation of milk in the udder and the filling up of the teats;

milk often flowing out an hour before delivery. She must now be closely watched, as many a fine colt has been lost, by being suffocated in the sheet. If the mare has been well taken care of while in foal, and in good health, but little danger will attend the act of parturition. When all is right she will be delivered in a very short time; if, however, there appears to be any great difficulty in producing her foal, a little gentle assistance is sometimes necessary.

The act of labour over, it is necessary to secure the cord by a ligature near the colt's body—the cord may then be severed by a sharp knife. This practice I have never seen recommended, or heard considered as necessary, but I am fully satisfied of its importance, as in some cases I have found the cord so strong that disastrous consequences would certainly have attended its violent rupture. It will be better to leave the mare alone for an hour or so, that she may be permitted the natural operation of licking her foal undisturbed, and that it may gather strength sufficient to enable it to rise. When upon its feet, and having learned to suck, there is but little danger but that both mare and colt will do well.

CHAPTER XIV.

TWENTY THINGS WHICH A BAD GROOM OR COACHMAN WILL DO.

1st. He will recommend his master to buy horses from the dealer who will allow him the greatest bribe, without taking into consideration whether they are likely to suit or not.

2nd. He will expect more profit, in the shape of gratuity, from the horse-dealer, coachmaker, saddler, or corn-dealer, than those tradesmen realise for themselves out of his order.

3rd. He will, in place of exercising his horses when not in regular work, let them stand with their legs swelling in the stable, while he is smoking a short pipe, and backing racehorses for shillings, behind the bar of a back-street beerhouse, with more of the same fraternity.

4th. He will, when he does take it in his head to exercise his horses, ride them on the hard stones in crowded thoroughfares, at any pace, to suit his own purpose, whether beneficial to the horses or not.

5th. He will fill the racks with good hay until the horses contract a habit of pulling it out under their feet, and so mix it with litter and waste it. He will also roll up the horse's bed in a morning, and cram it under the manger, and thus keep it under the horse's nose all day, and often prevent him from feeding, in place of taking it clear out of the stable, shaking it well up, and mixing with clean straw to sweeten it.

6th. When his horses are brought in reeking with perspiration, he will sponge them all over and wash their legs with cold water and then leave them to dry, while he fills his own belly and smokes his pipe, in place of instantly stripping his coat and vest, first coaxing his horses to stale, and then wisping them with straw from head to heel, until they are dry, wash out their mouths, give them a lock of the sweetest hay, and then, leaving them, refresh himself. After which he will return, without loss of time, and complete the grooming, water, feed, bed down, and leave them to their often much-needed rest.

7th. On mounting his master's saddle-horse for exercise, he will instantly apply the whip or spurs, and tear the reins about, as if the horse's mouth was made of iron; and this will be his readiest means of making the horse restive and unsteady while his master mounts him.

8th. He will invariably spur, check his horse's mouth, and curse him, while at exercise, for any little infirmity, as if it were vice—more especially for shying—whether the cause be a natural timidity, as in human beings, defect in the eyesight, or a display of gaiety, brought about by long confinement in the stable.

9th. He will trim his horse's heels with the scissors, instead of pulling the superfluous hair out, bit by bit, with his fingers dipped in powdered resin. He will also crop their tails, to suit his own taste, without his master's orders, trim the hair which naturally protects the inside of their ears, and singe them under the throat, and thus bring on influenza.

10th. He will often deal a little in dogs, and suffer them to lie among the hay, which the horse will not eat with so much relish, if he does not refuse it altogether, when impregnated with the excrements of these animals.

11th. When bedding a horse down, he will strike him on the legs with a pitchfork, just because he does not move quick enough from one side of the stall to the other; and (while grooming him) the more sensitive and ticklish his skin, the more he will torment him, more especially if anyone be watching this (to him) interesting exhibition; and he will, from time to time, strike him savagely on the shanks with the sides of his brush, or curry-comb, and thereby raise a permanent blemish, or inflict a cruel injury, and account for it to his master as the result of stable kicking, or, if a new purchase, that it was overlooked, and then the horse is returned for breach of warranty, especially if bought from a dealer who has not allowed him sufficient "tip."

12th. If the horse, by reason of his heavy, unsteady hand, tight curb, and severe bit, attempt to raise his head and fore-feet, because he cannot bear the excruciating pain thereby occasioned, he will say he is a "rearer," and, rising in his stirrups, strike him, with all his might, between the ears, as he will say, "to cure the brute," and thus lay the foundation for a case of poll-evil.

13th. He will irritate and punish a high-çouraged horse, merely for the sake of showing himself off as a rider, notwithstanding that the action and capers of the horse are so easy that he would not shake a fly off his back.

14th. He will take especial care to exclude every breath of air from the stable, lest it should make the horse's coat rough, and give him more trouble to groom it.

15th. In harnessing his carriage horses, he will persist in reining them up so tight with the bearing rein, that they cannot see to avoid uneven places, or loose stones in the road; and if they make a slight stumble, they must of necessity come down, because they have not the free use of their head to assist them in keeping on their legs, and, when down, they have to struggle hard to get up again, for want of freedom in their neck and head, so necessary to propel their fore-hands forward to stretch out their legs, and so place their fore-feet on the ground as a lever, to raise their hind quarters. No opinion is more erroneous, and none more believed by conceited servants, than that a bearing rein will prevent a horse from falling.

16th. He will scarcely miss a week without cramming alterative or condition balls down his horse's throats, made up from his own or brother-chip's prescription, and he would at any time take the opinion of the village blacksmith before that of a qualified V.S. who never allows him any "tip."

17th. If he happens to have a hard-mouthed pulling horse, he will always be on the look-out for new inventions in bits, and fresh tortures, never dreaming that the more these jaw-machines are applied to a horse, the less he will care for them, nor that a light even hand, in a plain snaffle bit, in the absence of punishment and irritating causes, is, after all, the best remedy for a pulling horse.

18th. If a bad coachman's horses appear more fretful and irritable than usual, he will not be at the trouble to get down from his box to examine the harness or curb chains, to see whether the former does not chafe them, or the latter be too tight; or if they appear more dull and sluggish than is their wont, he will never take into consideration that, like himself at times, they may feel a little amiss, without being so bad as to be off their food; but he will continue to whip them without thought or mercy.

19th. He will, after keeping his horses heavily clothed and without fresh air, in the stable, stand talking half-an-hour in the street with some friend, in cold, damp weather, exposing his horses to the certainty of a cold.

20th. He will never take advice from an experienced man, because he considers that he knows more than anyone else; and even if his master should kindly give him advice relative to the treatment of his horses, which he cannot reconcile to his own conceited ideas, he will be sure to ridicule and repeat it to his companions, who will coincide with him, that all masters are fools, and advise *him* to do as *they* do—treat their employers' valuable animals in their own particular, stupid way, until they are found out, and very properly sent about their business, to make room for better men.

CHAPTER XV.

OUR HORSES AND THEIR BRIDLES.

Look at that rough, uneducated waggoner, how easily he manages that splendid team of four horses through the most crowded thoroughfares of London, simply by a wave of the hand, or by a single word from him, which, addressed to any one of these willing and intelligent animals, in the midst of all this noise and bustle, is instantly heard, comprehended, and obeyed. Now walk with me into Hyde Park. There! see that young gentleman riding that smart little Norfolk cob, which appears ready to lay down its life if it could only please him; but all its efforts to do so are fruitless, for its inexperienced rider does not appear willing that it should either trot or canter, and a quiet walk does not suit, because nobody would notice him; he requires a kind of fretting, capering, prancing pace. The good old English roadster's style of walk, trot, or canter, is too steady for your fast young man; he thinks it far beneath him to speak a kindly word to his horse, or to control him by an easy signal; and however quiet the horse may be, he is rarely seen on his back without at least *four* unnecessary instruments of torture—namely, two spurs with sharp rowels, one whip, and a severe curb bridle. Why should it be the universal custom in this country for men armed with these cruel instruments of torture to ride quiet docile horses, and often punish them for a fancied fault, which they themselves bring about by their own want of experience and knowledge of the horse's nature. Our young gentleman will allow his terrier or Newfoundland dog to run by his side, will treat him and speak to him as tenderly as he would a sweetheart, but he would be considered a hardened brute if he led his Newfoundland in a string attached to a severe bit in his mouth, and constantly applying a whip, or a sharp spur, to his body—fancy this in Regent Street. How soon the officers of "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" would be down upon him; and yet the same young man is allowed to bit, spur, or whip *a horse* to his heart's content, whether the poor animal deserves it or not. I maintain that punishment, undeservedly inflicted upon any dumb animal, is cruel, and un-English in the extreme; and I am sorry to add that no animal in creation is more undeservedly punished than the horse. Nine horses out of ten will work cheerfully with plain easy snaffle bits in their mouths, and answer to the least aid or indication of their rider's hand imaginable, without gagging their tender mouths with severe, deep-levered curb bridles; for this, in the hands of inexperienced riders, will keep the horse in continual pain and ill-humour, consequent upon their unsteady hands and seat.

The better a horse is broken, the greater will be the danger to a bad rider, because the harassing hand and severe bit will render his wishes or indications unintelligible, so that the animal will become almost frantic when his mouth is checked and his sides are spurred, until, finding his efforts to please his rider futile, he naturally begins to take care of himself; some will commence with rearing and plunging, others will kick or buck-jump, and in that case rid themselves of their tormentors; another, who has not yet learnt these antics, will try to get the sides of the bit in his teeth, but is prevented by a lip-strap invented for that purpose. But the older a horse grows the more fertile he becomes in his inventive powers, for he will finally learn to arch his neck, and rest his head upon the bit for support, and thus he is enabled (if he thinks proper) to go ahead or run away, in spite of any effort which an inexperienced man may make to restrain him, for the harder this rider pulls the better the horse likes it, because it supports his head and neck.

An experienced horseman will ride and control a horse with a snaffle-bridle, when a bad rider, with heavy unsteady hands, cannot keep him together with all the gag-bits and safety nose-bands that ever were, or ever will be invented. Let the reader suppose one of these new tortures in the mouth of a horse, and attached to the hands of a man who has not the least idea what amount of pressure it takes to control him, or the amount of excruciating pain he is inflicting upon the mouth of the horse, and he will cease to wonder how accidents are caused, or why horses are quiet with some people, and restive with others—for the hand is the key to the horse's mouth, and the horse's mouth is the channel through which a good horseman will convey his wishes to the noble animal, but no horse of high courage, or worth having, will submit to be continually harassed and punished by a severe bit, but will eventually exhibit symptoms of insubordination, and perhaps become vicious.

If a man has not the ability to handle a horse lightly, and at the same time keep his balance in the saddle, he has no business to ride one of value and high courage. It would be better for the horse and safer for the man to keep his feet on terra firma.

The more a horse's mouth is used to a severe bit, the less he will care for it, as he will soon learn to neutralize its effects, by *pulling,* and keeping the reins in a state of tension, and thereby prevent the rider from checking or wriggling the bit to punish him. The dead steady pull is far less painful to him than the jaw-breaking the rider would be able to inflict upon him if allowed to keep his reins slack, and ready for a jerk.

One of the many causes which make pulling horses is the unsteady seat of their riders; many men cannot ride a *light-mouthed* horse, but they can sit a *puller* with ease, because the firm hold this horse allows them to have on the reins is the main thing upon which they depend to keep their balance.

I have seen the most inveterate pullers in some people's hands ridden in bits invented by their owners, of regular jaw-breaking or choking power, and still pulling so hard as to tear the skin of their rider's hands. And I have no hesitation in saying—having frequently proved my assertions by practice—that if one of these tear-away pullers changed hands, and his new owner would bridle him with an easy snaffle, and let him stand in the stable—to feel the difference—an hour before he mounted him, and, after mounting him, would take up his reins carefully—scarcely touching his mouth, and on no account punish him with the whip or spur, handling him lightly and equally at a quiet walk, neither irritating or attempting to restrain him, and subjecting him to this treatment for a few days, the horse would become so accustomed to his hand, that he would find out for himself (for a pulling horse is always intelligent) that he had no necessity to *pull*, for the free use of his head, as his rider grants him this favour, which his last master denied him, and would cause him to be easily managed with a light hand and a snaffle bridle; in fact, he and his rider would have confidence in each other, which is never the case when a horse is pulling hard one way and his rider another; the one wants his head, and the other is afraid to let him have it.

A very prevalent bad practice exists of picking up the reins of a severe bit the moment a horse is mounted, for there are few light or hard-mouthed horses that can bear this, whereas by taking up the reins carefully and feeling the mouth gradually, a horse will submit to an increasing pressure of the hand, without resistance or chafing his temper.

My opinion—strengthened by long practice—is that the multitude of mouthing bits commonly used in the training of colts may be very well dispensed with, and that a common snaffle, sometimes with, and sometimes without, a pair of running reins, and these in the hands of a patient though firm individual, with a fair share of common sense, steady hands and seat, on an easy-fitting saddle, and, above all, a thorough knowledge of the horse's nature and capacities, are sufficient for every purpose, in the training of colts for the saddle; heavy and sharp mouthing bits often chafe a colt's temper, and lacerate his mouth, and this, when healed, becomes callous and deadened, and seriously interferes with his training and future management.

On the other hand, it is not supposed that colts trained by the most experienced hands will, with a good grace, afterwards submit to be handled by heavy unsteady hands and severe bits, which they are often required to do. Training horses for *general purposes* and different riders is rarely performed with satisfaction to all parties, as the horse frequently changes hands, or if he remain with the same owner for years, he may still be ridden by various persons, and every one of these may have their own peculiar way of managing him; indeed, it is a very common practice for one man to spur or whip a horse for an imaginary fault, which the last person who rode him considered a virtue.

In conclusion, I would recommend all inexperienced horsemen to try a light hand and easy snaffle bridle on every description of horse, no matter what character they may have with him, before they adopt the prevalent fashion of riding him with a severe curb bridle, more especially if the horse be high-couraged, for in that case it is not likely he will submit to be punished with impunity; neither will he work to the rider's will, unless the indications of the hand are made so distinct as to be understood by him. In a word, the correspondence between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth must be uninterrupted by either pain or ill-feeling, so that they may work with confidence and perfect unison with each other.

CHAPTER XVI.

TAKING UP FROM GRASS AND CONDITIONING.

When a horse is taken up from grass the state of his body, as well as his outward appearance, must undergo a judicious course of preparation before he is put to hard work; his feeding and watering, exercise, grooming, and physicking, are the main points that require attention. It would be a sure mark of ignorance to take a horse up from grass and feed him with an unlimited quantity of corn and hay at once; these should be given very sparingly at first, particularly the hay; it should for the first week be sprinkled with water to moisten it, and the oats should be mixed with bran, in the proportion of two parts of bran to one of oats, lessening the bran a handful every feed, until it is seen by the consistency of the horse's dunging that he can digest his oats without the inconvenience and dangers of that bane to condition—constipation. This most essential point in the stable-management of horses is very much neglected. Grooms seldom take notice of a horse's dung until he is off his feed, and then they either have recourse to some nostrum of their own making up, or wait until inflammation sets in, and in either case a veterinary surgeon has mostly to be called, and a long bill is the consequence. Some horses are more inclined to constipation than others, hence it is that they all require attention to this point; it is the key to health and condition.

There are a class of grooms who think themselves extraordinarily clever, and when they take up a horse from grass to put him in condition deprive him of water to the extent of about one half of what Nature requires. They have an idea that by depriving the horse of water they harden his flesh, and get his belly up. But this treatment, when first a horse is taken up from grass, is very erroneous, and by exciting heat, thirst, and indigestion, inflammation is likely to ensue. Therefore my tyro should see that his groom allow his horses as much water as they will drink when they are first taken from grass, after which it may be lessened by degrees, but not to the extent that some clever(?) grooms carry it.

The temperature of the stable in which a horse is placed when first taken from the fields is another important consideration; it should not at first be much increased beyond that of the open air, or the sudden change will probably affect the lungs, and cause inflammation of those organs, or may occasion roaring or broken wind.

The horse should for the first few days be placed in a barn, or a roomy loose box, well ventilated, which will allow of his exercising himself, and prevent his legs from swelling, or his feet getting too hot. The temperature should be kept up and increased by degrees, until it is seen to take the requisite effect upon the horse's coat, by causing the long hair to fall off, and a renewal of short hair in its place. This should be encouraged and carefully watched by the groom, or, if he allows the temperature to get too high, the hair will fall off in patches, and leave the blue cuticle as bare as the paper I am writing upon—indeed I have, in the course of my experience, seen horses without a particle of hair on their bodies (except the mane and tail), caused by taking them up from grass and placing them at once in a hot stable. I may mention an instance of a clever horse-coper in the midland counties, who prepared a horse by these means, and afterwards sold him at a great price to a showman, who exhibited him as the celebrated "blue horse;" and a queer-looking animal he was too.

The clothing should also be very light at first, and the grooming done with a soft brush, or it will cause irritation and itching of the skin. Physicking in moderation will also materially assist the conditioning process, by first giving the horse a mild dose of physic when he comes from grass; but if his dieting be carefully attended to, as above recommended, there will be little, if any, necessity for physic afterwards. The less physic a horse has the better; it only weakens his digestive powers, and still further creates a necessity for it, until at last the horse cannot live without it, and will nearly always be amiss.

Exercising is the next point to which I shall call the attention of my tyro. At first, a walking pace is quite fast enough, and if he be stabled in a loose box, once a day of two hours' duration will be sufficient; but if in a stall, he ought to be exercised twice a day, morning and evening, and as time progresses—say a week—he may be trotted, and afterwards gallopped, to benefit his wind, and sweat off the superfluous flesh.

I may remark, that if the horse has been running at grass with others, it would be as well to place him in a stable where he will have company, if convenient. Horses are fond of company, and bear separation badly. I have known horses that have been taken up from others with whom they have associated a considerable time, grow as thin as a rake, and all attempts have failed to get them into condition, until a companion has been introduced to keep them company.

Another very important matter in the conditioning of horses, is water. The qualities of water vary much, and ought to undergo the examination of some persons more competent than the generality of grooms before it is given to a valuable horse, more especially a hunter or racer. I am convinced that many a horse has lost his race in a distant part of the country to where he has been trained, through not being inured to the water. High-bred horses have very susceptible insides, and a change of water will often relax or irritate, according to circumstances. We may divide all water into the hard and soft kinds; hard water may be ascertained by wash-ing the hands in it, and the soap curdling and swimming on the top. This, if drawn and instantly drank by horses, will induce internal inflammatory complaints, tubercles on the liver, &c., and in many instances colic and death. Soft water is by far the best, but whichever it may be, it ought to be procured some time before it is required for use, and kept in a tank or cistern, exposed to the sun; and where obnoxious kinds cannot be avoided, less at a time should be given, and oftener. Chalk or whitening is a very good corrector of hard water. But, were I an owner of race-horses, travelling from meeting to meeting, I would insist upon all the water my horses drank being boiled.

GLANDERS.

No disease with which the horse is affected is more contagious or more fatal than glanders. Thousands of horses have died or been destroyed while suffering from this terrible disease. Many hackney-coach proprietors and livery-stable keepers have been ruined by one of their horses coming in contact with strange horses in strange stables which have been suffering from glanders; and my tyro may readily conceive the havoc which the introduction of the disease would make in a stable full of valuable horses; therefore, he should be very careful when from home where he puts his horse, for the practice of placing a valuable horse at the nearest and most convenient stable while the rider makes a call cannot be too scrupulously guarded against, and I am satisfied is the cause of many horses taking this and other diseases equally contagious. The symptoms of glanders are a discharge of matter from one or both nostrils, but more frequently from one only—the left; in some cases a swelling may also be noticed in the cavity between the jaws, consisting of one or two small lumps about the size of chesnuts, and which, in time, suppurate and discharge a greenish or yellow matter; the horse will also appear fidgetty and uneasy about the head. Although this disease is contagious, and is caught by sound horses from those which are diseased, yet it may be generated by bad provender, close, unwholesome stables, sudden changes from exposure to cold and wet weather to hot stables, and from severe colds neglected from time to time. I have known glanders brought about by ignorant stablemen pinching the horse's nose. Farmers and others have a practice of catching a horse by the nose when running at grass, previous to haltering or bridling him; this will sometimes bruise the cartilage of the nose and cause ulceration, terminating in glanders. I believe also that the disease is frequently communicated by the clothing of grooms; but this is mostly the case when it is accompanied with farcy in the more advanced stage, or acute glanders. I have seen horses covered with ulcerations and farcy buds in coaching stables, the grooms who attended to them using the same brushes and wisps for grooming them as for horses free from disease, and the result was as may be readily conceived.

The first stage of glanders is often very mild, and on that account it is more to be dreaded, as many have no idea that the horse is suffering from the disease, until it is too late, and communicated to others. But the second stage is attended by ulceration within the nostrils, though sometimes too high up to be seen. The discharge is in larger quantity, glutinous, and sticking about the orifice of the nostrils, especially the left, and unless constantly wiped off, it will dry on, with a greenish crust, sometimes extending to the lips, and causing ulcers. The discharge is often streaked with blood, and the horse sometimes bleeds from the nostrils while working. The matter has a very offensive smell, and as the disease progresses it will generally run from both nostrils, and the eyes will also become mattery at the inner corners; the horse loses flesh and strength, has a hard, dry cough, and at last dies in a most miserable condition.

Glanders cannot be communicated by applying the matter from the nose of a glandered horse to the nostrils of a sound horse. But a horse affected with glanders will often inoculate himself, and thereby produce farcy, especially when at grass; the flies trouble him so as to make him rub or bite the part until abrased, and at the same time leave a little of the glanderous matter from the nostril on the wound. This may easily be proved by inoculating a glandered horse, in any part of his body, with his own matter. A glanderous ulcer will be produced, from which farcy buds will proceed, and extend all over the body. There are many ways in which a sound horse may be accidentally inoculated with the discharge from glanders, for the slightest scratch in any part of the body is sufficient to convey the poison into the blood. Horses that are cleaned with a curry-comb are very apt to be scratched in those parts where the bones are prominent, such as the inside of the hock or knee, and the shank bones; to such scratches glanderous matter may be conveyed by the hands of the groom, or more frequently by the wisp used after the curry-comb and brush. Glandered horses will generally rub their nostrils against the sides of the stall, or on the edges of the manger, the rack, or anything they come near, to alleviate the itching and pain which they constantly suffer. Thus they often deposit matter which may be taken up by the next sound horse that may chance to occupy the same stall. It was recently reported that glanders had made its appearance among the troopers in the Camp at Aldershot, but I believe without foundation. Nevertheless, the report created great alarm at the time, and was the subject (a short time ago) of many unpleasant questions and remarks being made in the Houses of Parliament. The roofs were taken off the stables where the horses (suspected to be affected) had stood, and the patients removed far away from the troop stables. I knew a large cab proprietor in Manchester, who lost every horse he had by this disease. There was once an instance of glanders finding its way among the horses of a regiment of English cavalry, and fifty horses were shot in one day. The 23rd French Dragoons, when quartered in Italy, in March, 1809, had seventy-six horses at one time affected with glanders and farcy.

There are many instances on record of human beings being inoculated with the matter from glandered horses, and the result has been a horrible death, the symptoms being similar to those in hydrophobia. I know a notorious horse-coper myself, who, while offering a glandered horse for sale in a fair, kept continually wiping the matter from the nostrils with his handkerchief, and getting into a brawl aftewards, the skin of his face was abrased, the handkerchief was applied, and the part inoculated. Nothing could arrest the disease, and the coper was, to all intents and purposes, glandered, and had the farcy; he suffered the most excruciating agony, until at last death put a period to his sufferings. It was said (some years ago) that the wife of Jemmy Massey, the pugilist, died from glanders taken from her husband's horses by some means. Massey, after his retirement from the ring, became a cab proprietor, living in an apartment over the stables, in London. In conclusion, I may add, that by the laws of Great Britain, a glandered horse may be destroyed if found working in a public thoroughfare, the usual course being first to summon the owner before a magistrate, who will, on proof being given by a qualified veterinary surgeon, order the destruction of the animal forthwith.

CHAPTER XVII.

FOOD OF HORSES.

FARMERS very much deteriorate the value of their horse stock by the absurd and cruel practice of turning them out, after a hard day's labour, to satisfy the cravings of an empty stomach on a scanty supply of soft grass. How can they expect their horses to be in condition, or to perform their work with ease, after grazing half the night in the often cold, wet meadow, before they fill their stomachs?

Horses that are in regular work ought to have their natural rest, but this they cannot have until their stomachs are satisfied. Where it is inconvenient to stable them, they should have a liberal supply of corn before they are turned out, and another feed when taken up in the morning. Grass is very useful as an alterative, or given instead of hay, it cools and purifies the blood; but working horses that are fed solely upon it (however slow), without any corn, soon lose condition and strength. I am aware that in giving advice to farmers I may be thought presumptuous, but I have had some experience myself in the line, and trust to be excused; I am also aware that farmers, as a class, are slow to adopt improvements, even though they may be convinced that they are recommended with a good intent.

But I shall, nevertheless, claim a right to say, that while a farmer, or any other person, takes care of his horses, he keeps his money together.

A good cart-horse, sound, and in good condition, will fetch a heap of money any day (we are constantly importing cart-horses from Belgium and elsewhere), and were I a farmer I would work my horses easy and feed them well, and in place of turning them out with an empty stomach after a hard day's work, to deteriorate their value, I would place them in roomy stalls or loose boxes, fill their bellies, and give them a good deep bed of clean straw, and allow them to take their natural and much-desired rest, undisturbed until morning. By adopting this course, and breeding them from young and sound mares, and sires of quality, working the produce easy from three to five years old, and afterwards selling them to the numerous contractors and public companies that are always open to purchase good draught horses, at high prices, I think the breeding of cart-horses might be made a very fruitful source of profit, now too much neglected by the farmers in this country, many of whom work their mongrel-bred horses to death, and the mares to a mass of infirmities, and then breed from them, to transmit and perpetuate the same to their progeny.

In the breeding of cart-horses, as well as nag horses, great attention is always paid to sires, but too little to mares. It is lamentable to see the poor old, spavined, broken-winded mares (some of them strained by hard work into a shape more resembling a dromedary than a horse), which it is customary for many farmers to breed from; this is not only unprofitable to themselves, but also unjust to the owners of stallions. Of course, this is most usual where there is a total absence of judgment, or a strongly rooted prejudice in the merits of t'ould mare. Quite as much depends upon dam as sire, and unless they are both possessed of a union of good qualities, the farmer need not be disappointed if the produce is an ill-shaped foal. I would strongly recommend my agricultural friends to breed from their very best mares, and while they are young and sound, for surely they will admit (however strong their prejudices may be) that, by the unerring laws of nature, "like begets its like."

The best food, and the most natural for horses, when not in work, is grass. When turned out to a plentiful supply of grass, in idleness, it fattens them, and keeps them in better health than hay and corn would do under similar circumstances; but I repeat that it is ridiculous for farmers to expect horses to work hard and look well on grass alone. Many disorders arise through feeding horses on bad hay and corn. If the hay given to horses was composed of grasses which they would not refuse to eat in the fields, no harm could accrue, as far as health is concerned, whilst the advantage of stabling them in inclement weather would be added to the certainty of a bellyfull when no grass could be found. But it happens that many grasses of very different qualities compose the dried article which acquires the general name of hay, some of which our high-bred and pampered horses reject altogether, while others are absolutely injurious to those horses that from long fast eat almost any sort of rubbishing hay, in their ravenous desire to satisfy hunger.

When grazing, the sensible horse leaves many kinds of grasses untouched; the famed daisy and gilded butter-cup have no charms for his palate; but when the mower comes, he humbles the whole produce of the field into one common mass, and the dried provender is served out to the horse of every kind, regardless of his palate or his constitution. It sometimes happens that hay is ill-got, and becomes what is termed mow-burnt, and if not extending too far, the process of excessive fermentation renders the grass more palatable to the horse, though not so to all hay-feeding animals. I would not, however, recommend mow-burnt hay to be given to horses, as it causes them to crave for water more than they do when fed on bright hay. Moreover, it may, like rank, ill-gotten, or coarse-grown hay, be the harbinger of disease, the mow-burnt hay having lost all its succulence, and the latter kinds, hard of digestion, and offensive to the horse's palate.

A very good corrective of bad hay is found in the free use of salt. And I think many farmers and horsemen do not fully appreciate the value of salt as a restorative after those internal inflammations to which the horse is (more than any other animal) subject. When the tone of the stomach is lost, or so impaired that the animal eats his food without his usual relish, salt at the rate of three or four ounces per day may be given in his corn and bran mashes; it will improve his appetite, and of course his condition and coat as well. A drench may be given as a substitute for the dry salt occasionally, as it descends more immediately to the intestines, unless the horse will drink salted water freely. Hay, when salted with a solution of salt-water, in the proportion of five or six ounces to a gallon of water, all horses will eat with avidity; but when used stronger than this, it will act as a purgative upon many horses.

The process of preparing salted hay is to fill a moderate-sized tub with the salt and water as above directed; then fill a wicker basket with the provender, and pour the salted water over it from a watering-pan repeatedly, until the whole mass is thoroughly wetted; after it has done dripping, let it be given to the horses. Twenty years ago, when potatoes were untouched by disease, and cheap, many farmers in our country gave them as provender to horses—chiefly in their raw state, and chopped up with furze, and a sprinkling of oatmeal—when hay was dear, and this food kept them in fair condition when not too hard worked. But this root is now too valuable for horse fodder, though where many potatoes are grown, in digging time, many farmers will sort those that appear predisposed to disease from the sound ones, and give them to their horses. The rinds of potatoes are bitter, and therefore act as a tonic, but the nutritive value is increased tenfold by boiling, and I think it better policy to boil than to give them raw, to either horses, cattle, or pigs.

There is no food, however, that I have so much confidence in as good sound oats (bruised), bright, well-got hay, and occasional bran mashes, according to the constitution of the horse. Sodden barley is given in some countries as a substitute for oats, and in that state is very nutritive. Beans are more nutritious than either oats or barley, but when given to excess they predispose the horse to inflammatory disorders (in fact, fever of the whole system), which ultimately fall into the legs and feet, the most prevalent of which, I may say, is greasy heels. On the first appearance of grease I would recommend the horsekeeper to discontinue the use of beans or oats, and give bran mashes or green food, when in season, and apply a poultice composed of fresh-burnt charcoal and linseed-meal, in the proportion of four ounces of the former (pounded) to twelve ounces of the latter, mixed together, and attached to the horse's heels, letting him rest. There are many other causes besides high-feeding that bring on greasy heels.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. RAREY'S SYSTEM OF TAMING HORSES.

Everything we wish to teach a colt should be conveyed to him in as intelligible a form as possible, and if our wishes and signals are understood by him, it will be more than I ever experienced (in the training of some thousands of horses) if he is not always found ready to obey.

But it is necessary that some impression should be made upon the instinct of the colt in order to rivet his attention exclusively upon his trainer; therefore the policy of being alone with him—adopted by Sullivan, the Irish horse whisperer, and others (before Mr. Goodenough introduced Mr. Rarey into this country to teach and divulge the secret)—must be obvious to all who have a practical knowledge of horses, or of animal nature. For, not only the horse, but every animal subjugated by the superior intellect of man, can be much sooner taught what it is required of him when alone, than when surrounded by objects which have a tendency to divert attention from the trainer.

The casting system, applied in the first stages of Mr. Rarey's method of training colts, is selected and preferred to make the necessary impression, because it is a fitting illustration of the extraordinary power which the system gives the man over the horse. By the exercise of this power, and subsequent kindness, the colt is made fully aware that man is his natural master, and that, by yielding to the powerful and intelligible signals given to him during the first lesson, he experiences nothing but kindness. His confidence in his trainer is at once established, and, so long as he receives kindly treatment, he submits to his after-lessons, such as mouthing, mounting, backing, harnessing, and the like, without any of that cringing timidity or rebellion usual with colts in the first stages of the old system of breaking; for when *one* man can make a horse lie down in the space of a few minutes, and lie still, it needs no philosopher to tell us that the same man can do anything else he may choose with the same horse—*i. e.*, after a sufficient time has elapsed to convey his wishes, so as to be understood by the animal.

It has always been considered a most difficult task, and a work of considerable time and patience, to make a horse lie down, and lie still, by any process of training except the one exhibited by Mr. Rarey; and although a horse will not lie still while punished by undergoing a surgical operation, I contend that the system is especially valuable to veterinary surgeons, as far superior to the old plan of violently, and by the united strength of four or five stalwart men, snatching the whole of the horse's legs from under him, and bouncing him, like a piece of timber, on to the ground, then kneeling on his head, and holding him down by main force. By the new system the horse is cast first, and hobbled *after*.

The assertion made by those who are prejudiced against the system—that the process of casting, by this system, is cruel—is preposterous, although I am prepared to admit that it can be made so by UNSKILFUL PRACTITIONERS, and so can common *riding or driving*.

Many horses will not lie down in their stalls or boxes, even after a hard day's work, solely because they have been hurt sometimes, either by lying down or rising up, or while they were down—hence their dislike to lying down again in the same place or one similar. But we will take, for instance, a horse that has stood on his legs continually (in that portion of time allotted to him for rest) for months together, solely because he is afraid to lie down through fear of the pain which (perhaps by sheer accident) he experienced the *last* time he lay down. I have seen many valuable horses absolutely ruined by the formation of curbs, spavins, capped hocks, &c., caused by standing in the stable, hanging back on the halter, and resting their quarters against the wall or stall post. Such horses are rarely in condition, because they do not take their natural rest. Well, suppose we apply Mr. Rarey's system to such a horse about three times, laying him down each time on a deep bed of clean straw the last thing at night, and leaving him down, I will guarantee that he lies all night, and does not rise until roused by a slap of the hand or a sharp word, on the following morning, and after the third or fourth time of casting, the stableman may tap him on the shin (after he has eaten his supper), and he will lie down on his bed like a child; later still, the shaking of the straw under him will be a sufficient signal for him to lie down and take his natural rest.

All this, to a man who perfectly understands the system in its *entirety*, is but the work of a week; and I am backed out by my own experiments when I say that the result will be the establishment of the horse's confidence, and that, when tried, he will lie down and take his natural rest, like other horses, and, to any man of common sense and humanity who may own such a horse, it will prove especially valuable. To those who are prejudiced against the system—without knowing *why*—it will be a convincing proof that, when properly applied, it is more humane than any other; for, if inhuman, why, let me ask, will a horse lie down so very easy the *second* or *third* time, if he has been punished by the same manner of casting the *first* time?

A horse will always object to, and rebel against, anything that gives him pain or alarms him, but after he properly understands the signal for casting by the new system (which he does in one or two lessons), he absolutely likes it. I have seen colts raw from the field, after once casting, testify their pleasure and confidence in the handling of the operator, by rolling over and over again at his feet, then lying still to be petted like a cade lamb.

With men who *think*, and *reason* with a new question before they give a decided opinion, the system finds favour, but no man whose knowledge of the system is not perfected by his *own observations and practical experience* is qualified to give an opinion upon its merits or failings. No idea can be formed as to the practical working of the plan, unless it is seen and explained to them in every particular.

There are scores of ways at present in vogue for the training or rather breaking of colts, many of which are diametrically opposed to each other, every horse-breaker, of course, thinking and asserting that his plan is the best.

How many horses are regularly spoiled by these various ways of breaking, my readers can form some idea, if they are colt buyers or breeders. Still I am proud (as an Englishman) to admit that we have many patient and skilful horse-trainers in England and the sister country, (notwithstanding what Mr. Rarey may say to the contrary; and the fact of that gentleman having to advertise and "compensate parties liberally" for the supply of vicious horses, to exhibit their violent struggles for the pleasure of "his patrons," is a proof that we are not so ignorant in the science of horse-training after all.) We have many horse-trainers on this side of the Atlantic who turn colts out of their hands perfect patterns of gentility and obedience to the correspondence of *their own hands* and legs. But I appeal to these individuals whether they are not frequently mortified beyond the endurance when these colts are returned to them after the lapse of a few weeks as restive and unmanageable, the gentlemen who own them (in many instances) not knowing how to apply the signals, by handling them properly, as the trainer did. And this is not surprising, for how can it be expected that the colt should obey the directions which his rider or driver presumes to give without knowing how, and which, I may say, are sometimes in direct opposition to the signals which his trainer has been for weeks teaching him to obey.

On the other hand, there are scores of men who have the assurance to style themselves "horse-breakers" who have not the most remote idea of the horse's nature and capacities; and it is no uncommon thing for them to turn colts out of their hands absolutely confirmed in vice, for the poor animals are so punished, bullied, and bewildered in their hands that they learn to regard man as their natural enemy; and, in self-defence, they attack all specimens of human kind indiscriminately with their heels or teeth every time they have a chance to do so.

Many who are prejudiced against Mr. Rarey's system of training say—"What good is its application to a *vicious* horse, if he breaks out again?" and I am free to confess that, whatever any one may say to the contrary, after one man has applied the system to a vicious horse, he would (although *temporarily* quiet with him) break out again, and be as vicious as ever with another as also with the operator; but the same system is at hand to *subdue him again and again,* until a *lasting* impression is made upon him, and by continuing the system (no other person but the operator using or handling him in the mean time), he is rendered *permanently* docile with him, but with him alone.

The beauty of the system is that it can be imparted to any man having a knowledge of handling horses, and a good *nerve.* To others, who know nothing of horses, neither *this* system, nor *any other*, is of any use until they have learned to apply it.

We will suppose, for instance, that the reader is a timid rider, and has a rearing, jibbing, kill-devil of a horse that will not pass a certain lane or street end with him; he sends him to the most skilful breaker (by the old system) he can find, and that by dint of rough riding with whip and spur, the breaker succeeds in making him pass the particular spot where he has chosen to stop with his owner, yet I'll lay my life to an orange (and all practical men will endorse my assertion) that when the owner rides him to the same place again he will stop the second or third, if not the *first*, time, and be as obstinate as before, *unless the hands, nerve, and seat of the rider have undergone a change for the better.*

A vicious horse can tell when he is ridden or handled by a nervous "Miss Nancy" sort of individual, and will not be long in taking advantage of his power in the way it suits its fancy best.

The same practice applies to the approaching of a biter or a kicker in the stable; if a man be nervous or inexperienced, he falters and hesitates in his step;

the horse having been abused by ignorant grooms from behind (where is the vicious horse that has not), naturally fancies that, by dwelling, some harm is intended, and at once proceeds to attack, or (as *he* supposes) to *defend himself.* A man who strikes a horse, when his head is tied to the rack, is invariably an *ignorant,* as well as a *cowardly* fellow; he generally uses a pitchfork or broom-handle, sometimes a whip, and, while himself standing out of danger, he frequently administers a dose of punishment to the poor horse without the least provocation; and thus it often happens that when others approach them unthinkingly, with a walking-stick or whip in their hand, they get kicked or bitten.

It is contended by some gentlemen that Mr. Rarey's system is worth nothing, unless a vicious horse, after being in the hands of a tamer, and made docile with him, will submit to anything which his owner or conceited grooms choose to impose upon him. But I ask any reasonable man whether it is likely that a high-couraged horse will suffer himself to be whipped and spurred by his rider, bludgeoned on the legs and body with a broom-handle, in the stable, and otherwise ill-treated (sometimes for *past* offences), without ever raising his hoofs or opening his mouth in self-defence or retaliation.

Let me also ask what the system would be worth if the horse stood all this unmerited abuse, without rebellion? and anticipate the answer which all *practical* horsemen will make to the question, by saying, "not the tail of a Yarmouth bloater;" for it would be a convincing proof that the horse's nature, as well as his courage, was totally destroyed.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHY ARE NOT RACEHORSES BRED WITH A COMBINATION OF USEFUL QUALITIES?

YES. Why do we not breed our racehorses with more bone and muscle, deeper bodies, and shorter legs, so that they may render the *country*, as well as the turf, some little service, as some compensation for the enormous sums we grant them—nearly three millions yearly, in public purses? What do we get in return for the public bounties granted by our government? Not that for which the money was first given—viz., the improvement of our breed of horses; but, on the contrary, we are every year deteriorating the qualities of our saddle horses and troopers, by the reckless mixture of breed with our racers, under the idea that we are infusing blood and staying qualities into their veins. Blood is all very well when allied to a compact, useful form, able to carry *men* a resonable distance; but, when it is produced by "in-and-in breeding," from shallow forms on long tottering legs, it ceases to be worth the name of "blood," in the common acceptation of the term. Those qualities in our racehorses which are decreasing every year more and more are the most useful and natural ones—namely, constitutional vigour, freedom from hereditary disease, strength of bone, largeness of muscle, and great endurance under severe exertion. These are the qualities which we require for use; for very few of us would buy a horse for his single quality of speed —indeed, none but turfmen would care to own such an one. The general public do not require such horses, because they have no use for them in the daily routine of life. Those who like to travel fast may gratify their wish any time in an express train. But even if it were our wish to travel fast on horseback, it would be unsafe to do so on the public roads; and where would we find a racehorse to carry a fourteen-stone farmer to market at the pace, and come into the inn yard as fresh as the smart little cob produced from a judicious cross?

There are thousands of racehorses bred, and reared to the age of two years, which, after trial, are found worthless for the purpose they were bred for, and these are expelled from the racing studs in disgrace, and they are sold for little or nothing; some of them are given away, and are much too dear even at that price. Thus, our country, once famed for the best breed of saddle-horses in the world, is becoming overrun with a lot of worthless, weedy, refuse racing stock, which, by many inexperienced farmers and breeders, are gradually being crossed with, and thus deteriorating the breed of our short-legged, deep-bodied, wide-hipped, strong-loined saddle-horses, the lineage of which, in a few instances, we can still trace, by their compact forms, to the breed of racehorses encouraged by our forefathers, who bred horses for *useful* purposes, to carry *men* long distances, and not the spindle-shanked velocipedes bred by our turfmen of the present day, that break down after running a few furlongs with a baby on their backs. Of what earthly use, I would again ask, are the racehorses of the present day, when they are tried and found wanting in speed for the purpose for which they were bred? Besides the great change that has taken place in the forms of our racehorses, they are become strongly disposed to lameness and disease, and before even starting for their *first* race, many of the best are lame; others are rendered so for life by running a short race like the Derby; nearly *all* are more or less infirm from their birth, and would knuckle in their pastern joints if they were to carry an average-sized man a reasonable distance on a turnpike road. Our racehorses have been much injured under the existing practice on the turf, of breeding in-and-in, as it is only from a small portion of the vast numbers of racehorses that the breed is kept up Every one breeding for the turf sends his mares only to the stallions whose stock has most speed. If the old style of racing had been kept up—viz., four mile distances, under a weight of ten to thirteen stone, this evil would have been avoided; because, when endurance and constitutional vigour became reduced in any stud, the owner of it would naturally have sent his mares to a stallion which was yet in possession of those qualities.

It is curious to see the helplessness of our thoroughbred foals, which usually cannot move about for some days after being foaled. On first observing this, I suggested to the owner of one that it would be better to destroy the poor little miserable devil; but I soon found it was the pure effect of constitutional weakness in the parent, common to all thoroughbred foals. Notwithstanding the public bounties to our turf for the encouragement of a fine and serviceable breed of saddle-horses, suitable either for the hunting field or for the cavalry, we are every year more and more deteriorating the race, and thus obliged to yield to the growing weakness, and give them less to do, with shorter distances to run, and lighter weights to carry. The Jockey Club are content to see our racehorses losing every quality but speed; for that, and that alone, is the quality required by the racing world under the existing system of running. To the Jockey Club, or to the gentlemen who breed our racehorses, it matters not what is the character of their horses, as a whole, each individual desires only to have the best of that whole. But I do not see what it can matter to these gentlemen, or the racing world, what is the average speed of their horses. Their sole object is to win money; but if they would insist on the performance of the old tasks — viz., longer distances, with heavier weights, our turf would soon abound with horses displaying a fine union of constitutional vigour, physical strength, and endurance, with sufficient speed for every *useful* and *pleasurable* purpose, while gentlemen connected with the turf would win and lose their money with as much facility as they do at present.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SELECTION AND TRAINING OF SHOOTING COBS.

A GOOD shooting cob is a dray horse in miniature, from 12 to 14 hands high—according to the weight he may have to carry—gentle in his disposition, yet active and spirited when called upon to put forth his energies in perfect obedience to his rider: he has a small head, with a full sparkling eye, short, sharp, and lively looking ears, high and sloping withers, which enable him to carry his rider fair on his back, without interfering with the free action of his shoulders; he has a deep body, strong joints, flat, sinewy legs, and sound, well-formed feet.

Free and vigorous in his action, and endowed with extraordinary powers of endurance, he will carry his rider up and down rough stony declivities, or cheerily trudge over the boundless heather for hours upon hours, without trip or tumble, or exhibiting the least symptom of distress. A really good cob, for ordinary riding, is a very scarce animal now-a-days, and for every one offered for sale there are at least three customers, but for a very well trained *shooting cob* of the proper stamp, the demand is still greater in the season.

The difficulty in procuring a good shooting cob arises from a want of union of the most essential qualities; for no matter how perfect he may be in every point of formation, he is utterly worthless if he does not stand still while his rider takes a steady aim, as also after the report of the piece. It will, therefore, depend, to a considerable extent, upon the manner in which the cob is trained, whether he becomes suitable for this purpose or not; but care should be taken not to select one that is constitutionally nervous, or with impaired vision, as in the former case the *report*, and in the latter the *sight* of the gun over or near his head, will form an insuperable bar to his qualifications as a perfect shooting cob. On the other hand, if his nerve and sight be ever so good, he may be spoiled by an inexperienced trainer. When a cob is selected for this purpose, he should be gradually accustomed to the *sight* of the gun, and then the *report*, by first snapping a few caps, and, if he appear to be alarmed at this, let him be soothed and conciliated both by voice and patting of the hand, until he be thoroughly reconciled to his new business. This should be practised in an open field, and kept up for about half-an-hour, repeating the lesson three or four times daily. Then load the gun with a light charge of powder, and afterwards increase it by degrees, according to the confidence which he may exhibit, always bearing in mind, from the first to stand in his front, with a man at his head, who will continually soothe him with voice and touch; then, when he appears thoroughly reconciled to a full discharge from a double gun, the barrel may be rested on the saddle while it is fired; and if he stand that quietly, let him be mounted by a person who understands his business (a cavalry soldier is the best man to train a shooting cob); and, above all things, never punish or speak to him harshly; and, if he appear more nervous during one lesson than another, his trainer should take into consideration that horses, like human beings, are at some times more nervous than at others, and if abused for this—a thing he cannot help—the confidence between them will be lost, and it will take some time before it is, if ever regained.

When the cob is properly trained, and well settled down to his work, his rider will do well to consider, that while he takes every precaution to provide himself with sandwiches, and the accustomed flask of old mountain dew, his cob may require some stimulant to comfort him in his arduous duties; but if it be considered inconvenient to carry a feed of corn in addition to the ordinary equipment of a sportsman, I would recommend him to provide a lean steak from a rump of good beef, which he may carry in his pocket, and after two or three hours' ramble, he should dismount, and first detaching the bridle bit on one side from the head stall, he will wrap the steak round the bit from end to end, and secure it with twine seven or eight times round, and replacing the bit in the cob's mouth, again remount; he will immediately commence to champ the steak, which will not only promote saliva, and so relieve his parching thirst for hours, but the nutriment he will derive from the meat will enable him to bear up with renewed vigour and comfort, which no thorough sportsman will ever deny to a dumb animal.

This treatment will also apply to horses on a long journey, where it may be difficult to obtain the customary feeds of corn and water.

CHAPTER XXI.

HORSEMANSHIP FOR GENTLEMEN.

The earlier in life the pupil commences to practise the instructions I shall give, the better chance he will have to excel in this noble and health-giving accomplishment. The horse or pony upon which he takes his first lessons should be equipped with a plain single-reined snaffle (bridoon) bridle, and a horse-rug, neatly folded, on his back, and secured with a single-web sincingle. It is a prevailing opinion that the rougher or more difficult a horse be to ride in the pupil's earlier lessons, the more likely he is to acquire a firm seat; but I am prepared to assert, from long experience, as well as the dictates of common sense, that this is a most erroneous and absurd idea, for it not only destroys the confidence of the pupil, and renders, what should be a pleasure, a positive and dangerous task, but often causes them to give up the idea of learning to ride in despair.

My plan is to select a quiet horse for the opening lessons of a pupil; and the first instructions will be to teach him to mount without stirrups.

The pupil will stand on the near (left) side of his horse, and with the fore-finger and thumb of the right hand take hold of the middle of the bridle-rein, and raise it up until he has a light and equal feel on the horse's mouth. He will then divide the reins, by placing the little finger of the left hand through them, and then bringing the spare part through the hand over the fore-finger. Grasp the hand, placing the thumb on the reins, which will keep them in their place, and prevent them from slipping—thus a kind of slide is formed of the hand, which, by taking hold of the middle of the rein, as before described, and relaxing the grasp a little, enables the pupil to slide the hand up and down, and shorten or lengthen the reins at pleasure, in an easy and gradual manner, which is a very important matter in horsemanship, especially with a light-mouthed irritable horse. The pupil having placed his bridle-hand properly on the reins, will quit the hold with his right hand, throwing the spare part of the reins over the horse's neck to the off (right) side, and with his right he will take a lock of the mane, and wrap it twice round the thumb of the bridle-hand, which will then firmly grasp, not only the reins, but the mane, making a purchase to spring from, as well as keeping the horse "in hand." He will then step back with his right foot, and, with an angle bound, spring forward, placing his right hand firmly on the rug (but not to grasp it), leap from his feet, with one or two preliminary jumps, clear on to the horse's back, without first touching the horse with his stomach, or unseemly and awkward scrambling, as by the self-taught method. I am aware that it is next to impossible for the pupil to do all this without considerable practice; but the object is to supple the limbs, and make the pupil agile and active, which is a great acquisition to a horseman; and it should be repeated five or six times every lesson, while the pupil rides in the "blanket order," until he can accomplish it easily, and without any apparent effort.

The object of the first lessons being given on the rug is to accustom the pupil to depend solely upon his seat for the balance of his body, which cannot be done with stirrups, as, if he leans to the right or left, he is sure to make a purchase, or lean on the stirrups; and even if the leathers do not sometimes give way, it looks bad to see a rider leaning more to one side than the other, which is mostly the case with self-taught horsemen, or those who have been, from the first, accustomed to ride with stirrups. And I may here say that I would back the farmer's son, or the son of a country fox-hunter, or the British dragoon (who all take their first practice without stirrups), for firmness of seat, and balance of body, against all the pupils turned out of the majority of the public riding-schools, where it is the custom of the masters to give their first instructions with stirrups.

To return to my pupil, who is now mounted, I shall place one of his hands on each rein, by passing it between the little finger and the third one, and over the fore-finger, placing the thumb upon it, to keep it from slipping. The hands are now both placed on the reins, and should be from six to eight inches apart, and raised from four to six inches from the pommel (fore-part) of the saddle, the wrists a little rounded, and the finger-ends pointing towards the body. The elbows should be drawn back, so as to bring them on a line with the shoulders, and lightly closed, without pressure, or the appearance of awkward stiffness. The head should be kept well up, the chest advanced, the shoulders back, and the small of the back hollowed, but the body should be set on the saddle, so as to lean neither to the right, left, back, or front. The leg and foot should be drawn back, well under, to support the body, the toes turned in (without twisting the ancles), the heels considerably lower than the toes, and the thighs be brought with the inside well to the saddle.. From the thighs to the heel, the leg must bear with the inside to the horse, but without pressure, except in case of need, for which they are always ready to be applied at a moment's notice. When the pupil is placed in this position, he is what is professionally termed "united," and ready for any emergency.

In the pupil's early lessons he may appear a little stiff and awkward, but by attention and constant practice, this appearance gradually gives place to an elegant and easy seat, enabling him to sit still, easy, confident, and collected.

Having placed my pupil in a proper position, the horse must commence and continue to walk for a few lessons, and the pupil be carefully watched and patiently instructed to adhere to the proper instructions, until it is perceived that he can remember and practise them himself.

He must then commence to ride the horse at a "trot," and if the animal be properly broken, he will answer to the easing of the hands, and a gentle pressure of both legs, by passing from the walk to the slow trot by the application of these—the proper signals—when it is more than probable that the pupil will commence to roll about and clutch at the rug with one or both hands; if so, he is certain to draw up his heels and plant them in the horse's side, to assist him in preserving his balance, and become what is termed disunited. My readers will therefore see the force of my remarks, as to the difference of a quiet, and an irritable hot-tempered horse, being used for the first lessons. If the latter kind of animal be used, he is sure to begin to bounce and plunge at the unsteadiness of the hands, and the uneven violent pressure of the heels—whereby the pupil is sometimes unseated and his confidence lost. If he happen to be of a nervous disposition, too, he declines to remount, and gives up, in despair, the idea of ever becoming a rider.

This I mention that the pupil should learn the proper use of his hands and legs, before he is suffered to mount a horse that is difficult to manage.

If it be perceived that the pupil is likely to fall by continuing at the trot, the horse should be brought to a walk, and then to a halt, and the gentleman once more placed in a proper position. The continual instructions being combined with the efforts of the pupil, will, eventually, and in the course of a few lessons (of one hour each), enable him to sit still and keep his heels down. By practice he is taught to keep his seat, and balance his body without rolling from right to left, and resting his feet upon the stirrups for support to keep him from falling—which he most assuredly would do if he had them.

When the pupil can keep his seat without much effort, he should be allowed to ride another horse, in the same order, and for four or five lessons the horse should be changed each time, as horses, having different mouths, differently formed backs, and different action, will tend more to perfect him in firmness of seat, and balance of body, than by taking all his lessons on one particular animal; and when he can manage these changes of horses pretty well, he may be allowed to ride in a stripped saddle (saddle without stirrups), and a double (or curb) bridle, with which he must first be instructed to mount.

The pupil will stand as directed in mounting in the "blanket order." He will take the middle of the snaffle-rein in the ball of his left hand, letting it hang loosely, and without bearing, on the horse's mouth. The object being now to teach the pupil to ride with a light and steady hand, for which the snaffle-riding with both hands has partly prepared him, he will take up the curb-rein with his right hand, carefully drawing it up until he very lightly and equally feels the horse's mouth; and in place of taking a lock of the mane he will place his bridle-hand on the curb-rein, by passing the little finger through them and bringing the spare part through the hand and over the fore-finger. The bridle-hand may now be placed on the pommel of the saddle, and his right hand firmly on the cantle (hind part), and standing with both feet together, he will, by making a purchase of the saddle, spring up and bring his knees to bear against the saddle-skirts, and dwelling there a moment to steady himself, quit the hold on the cantle and quietly place his right leg over the saddle. The bridle-hand will then quit the pommel, and the reins being properly placed before mounting, all the pupil will have to do is to place the hand in the same position as it occupied in snaffle-riding. The right hand must hang carelessly down from the shoulder, and the body will be placed in the saddle as on the rug, and in the same position as destined for stirrup-riding.

The horse being now ridden solely on the curb rein, which, being more severe than the snaffle, necessarily requires a much lighter and a steadier hand.

If the horse is well-broken, and properly in hand, the pupil may manage him with the hand placed on the reins, as before directed, with a very little practice. The aid or signal for the near (left) side being applied by turning the back of the hand down; and for the off, or right side, the aid must be applied by rounding the wrist a little, to which the well-broken horse will always answer.

And here I may remark that I have frequently heard persons, who profess the business of "riding masters," say it is impossible to manage horses with one hand; and so it is, by their method of teaching. But a complete answer may be given to them, by reminding them that all cavalry horses are managed and controlled solely with one hand, for the right hand of the cavalry soldier must be free to fight and defend himself in action. Therefore, what is to prevent civilians from practising the same method, when properly instructed?

The pupil will remember that he is on all occasions to keep his horse in hand, so that in case of a stumble he is ready to assist or control him, if, by any unforeseen chance, the animal is suddenly startled or frisks about in play. The horse should be supported and encouraged in his paces by a light and gentle "correspondence" between the pupil's hand and the horse's mouth, the wrist and little finger being quite sufficient to keep it up with a well-broken horse properly in hand. By this constant feeling or correspondence, the horse is easily governed, and cheerfully works to the will of the rider; and nothing tends more to create good-will between the horse and rider, than light and steady hands, never wantonly tugging, or pressing unnecessarily on the horse's mouth, which not only chafes and frets him, but renders the proper governing signals indistinct, and, in many instances, consequently, the horse is severely punished for seeming disobedience, when the sole blame rests with the inexperienced rider.

The aid or signal for a canter is conveyed to the horse by a double feel on the horse's mouth on the off side, and a light pressure of the leg on the near side, to which a properly broken horse will at once answer by stepping off into a short and graceful canter, with the right or proper leg leading; and any disposition to lag, or slackening in pace, may be corrected by a repetition of these signals, which is a far superior method for conveying the requirements or wishes of the rider, than the vulgar and cruel application of the whip, so commonly used for this purpose.

The beauty of horsemanship is to sit still, and govern the steed with as little exertion as possible, combining firmness of seat and balance of body with steadiness of hand and beauty of position, in place of the toes and elbows being at right angles, sitting all on the back part of the leg, the arms flying about like the sails of a windmill, and the whole body displaying a series of those awkward movements in the trot, consequent upon the rider having his feet in the stirrups far in advance of his seat in the saddle, so that at each vertical motion of the horse (which a good horseman avoids by rising a little and lightly pressing the stirrups) he is obliged to shift the body forward to a corresponding extent, at the cost of much tiresome and unseemly exertion.

After the pupil has had a few lessons without stirrups, and being competent to keep his hands steady and his heels down, he may be permitted to ride with stirrups, spurs, and whip (it being customary to carry a whip, but not necessarily to *use* it when the horse is ridden with spurs).

CHAPTER XXII.

EARLY WORKING OF CART COLTS.

MANY, very many, capital cart colts are spoiled in temper, ruined in constitution, and rendered infirm and unsound before they have attained the age of five years, that being the age at which the laws of nature have ordained and common sense suggested they should first be put to work, nevertheless the penny-wise and pound-foolish system of working them at two years old, which, I am sorry to say, has been more or less practised by small farmers for ages, in England as well as the sister country, seems to be on the increase; not that I think a *little* work, with judicious treatment, due regard being had to their strength, would do a strong two-year-old colt any harm (if worked without shoes on soft ground); but the worst of it is, that when such a one settles down kindly to draught work, such as ploughing, dung-carting, or the like, their management is mostly left to servants, many of whom are not sufficiently interested in their master's welfare to take proper care of their horses; and, even if they are, I do not see how (by the manner colts are generally put to work in *teams*) their ardour can be regulated at all times; for although the waggoner may take care that the draught chains of the cunning old shaft horse are kept tight when the load is fairly started, he cannot always make him *start* at the same moment as the young hot-headed colt—a good cart horse always prepares himself by gradual exertion before he makes a start up a steep hill or out of a boggy place; but the colt jerks and frets, is baulked, and runs back with his tail between his legs, and his croup touching the horse's nose behind him; he tries again, and again he is baulked—the heavy load is sinking the wheels into the soft ground—and it is in vain that the game old horse in the shaft throws the whole weight of his forehand into the collar, and plants his toes firmly into the soft yielding soil, for he cannot start the ponderous load of manure himself, and the colt is now throwing up his head, turning now a little to this side, and again on that; he is bewildered by the baulk he has just experienced by pulling before the shafter was ready; and now the shafter is tugging at the load before he (the colt) is ready—or, in fact, knows what to do; he is, however, sharply reminded by the sharp cut of the driver's whip, which, I am sorry to say, is too often followed by the brutal curse and ill-humour of English carters, who generally follow up the ill-treatment upon the colt for the sake of gratifying their passion because he did not start at the precise moment they required him—forgetting that they themselves knew nothing until they were taught, and some of them very little afterwards. Terrified by abuse, the poor colt jumps wildly forward with his shoulders into the collar, plants his fore and hind toes in the ground until every muscle and tendon of his thighs, hocks, back, sinews, and shanks, fairly quiver again by the undue strain forced upon them; and if the shafter happens to be pulling at the same moment, the heavy load is lifted out of the mud, and the cart fairly started; but if they do not both happen to pull at the same moment, the same scene as before described is enacted over again, until the colt is spoiled in temper, and by thus overstraining nature before it has had time to develop itself, it must give way somewhere, similarly to the bursting of steam boilers, when strained by too much pressure. Such is the inevitable result with horses whose natural powers are overtaxed by the avarice of masters and the ignorance of servants.

Need farmers wonder, then, that such things as curbs, splints, spavins, strained loins, shoulders, and fetlocks, should begin to develop themselves in their colts when they have been worked a short time, or that horse breeding is a losing game, for nine farmers out of ten never give it a fair chance, as by working their colts too young they render them comparatively valueless, whereas, if they could be content to let them run on sweet dry pasture-land until five years old or thereabouts, it would pay them *well,* as their forms and size would then be properly developed; their bones would be *bones,* and not mere gristle, ready to shoot out of its place and deform the colt on the least undue strain of a tender part. What folly!—what inhumanity!—what bad policy!—to take a fine promising two-year-old colt, sound and right as a trivet in every respect, to a village blacksmith, and allow him to cut and carve his feet, until they will fit—in many instances not a horse shoe, but a shapeless piece of iron. Why, any man with a grain of common sense ought to know better than to allow colts' feet to be sliced up and nails driven into them before they have attained their natural size, shape, and consistency, so as to be able to bear it; every other part of the colt is growing at two years old, and why shouldn't his feet be growing too? But let me ask those who work their colts at that age, how they expect the feet to grow and expand to the shape intended by nature, when they are bound together with an iron shoe and nails? Cripple a horse's feet and he will not be worth a fraction. What comfort has a growing boy or girl in a pair of tight shoes? if their parents persist in making them continue to wear them, the result will be corns, and deformed feet. It may be said that race-horses are shod at two years old and before, but their shoes are of a different construction from those used by draught-horses; and how very many racers have contracted feet, fall lame, and break down, before they are three years old.

I have frequently seen, with regret, two and three-year-old colts beaten with the butt end of a whip, and brutally kicked on the shanks and belly because they did not answer to the "hawve," "gee," "wo," and "come up" of the English carter, who has seldom any idea of *first patiently instructing* the colt to obey him before he expects to be understood. I have seen carters lead colts reeking with sweat to cold spring water and allow them to drink their fill, and afterwards leave them to stand in the stable, when, as a natural consequence, they become afflicted with gripes.

It is a very common practice—in some parts of England—to work colts, as well as old horses, in the plough seven or eight hours without food or water, thus teaching them, as it were, when they are fed, to bolt their food, in the extreme hurry to satisfy the cravings of an empty stomach, which thereby becomes unnaturally distended with unmasticated food; and before the first process of digestion is completed, or perhaps began, they are again harnessed and set to their work, which, if severe, will probably end in permanent injury to their wind, or, which is quite as likely, the food will ferment in the stomach; and this injudicious treatment, arising from a total ignorance of the horse's nature, and of the treatment which he requires, may terminate very possibly in stomach-staggers and death.

The working of colts at two or three years old is quite as censurable as the working of children in factories at a tender age; but the legislature has, in its wisdom, found it necessary to pass a law to prohibit the working of children before they arrive at a certain age, by which judicious provision the risk of deformity, which would otherwise be incurred, is considerably diminished. I wish they would also pass a law to prohibit the working of horses before they have attained the age of four, at least, if not five, years old; for if such a law were passed and rigidly enforced, it would not only be the means of decreasing the sufferings of the poor horse from many painful and chronic diseases, engendered by working him too young, but it would also be the means of greatly improving the quality of our cart-horses generally, my opinion, strengthened by a considerable experience, being that spavins, curby hocks, navicular disease, roaring, malformation in the legs, whether natural or caused by over-straining in work, is frequently transmitted to the offspring. How frequently we see, in large manufacturing towns, where by working at the manufacture of the staple article—whatever that may be—the workman has to sit or stand in one posture, until some particular deformity developes itself, and most, in those who have the least strength to resist undue pressure. And how frequently do the children of these poor men and women inherit the bow-legs, knock-knees, twisted feet, and many other infirmities of their parents. It is the same with horses; and I am afraid always will be so, for the greater part of the infirmities with which the poor horse is afflicted, and his consequent depreciation in value, are caused by the avarice, ignorance, and the brutality of man.

THE END.

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